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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[DAY DREAMS.]

## TIME'S REVENGE; OR, FOILED AT THE LAST.

### CHAPTER I.

#### FORTUNE'S KNOCK.

From ignorance our comfort flows;  
The only wretched are the wise.

PRICE.

"A WEDDING! Yes, a pretty wedding," cried Beattie, with most unladylike violence, swinging her left foot to and fro as she perched on the dining-table. "At forty it is absurd for people to talk about getting married. Ridiculous! preposterous!"

"I suppose Aunt Prue can please herself," remarked Fayette, tranquilly; "and she ought to have been married at eighteen, only somebody did something to prevent her."

"Please herself! I suppose she will please herself. It is all very well to talk, but what is to become of us girls?" demanded Beattie, wrathfully.

"We could not have expected Aunt Prue to keep us always, you know, Beattie, and you will be eighteen in August, and I was nineteen in February, so it is high time we set to work somehow," observed Fayette, in a little plaintive voice, uncomfortably contradictory to her valorous words.

"For my part, I always thought Aunt Prue

meant to try and get us married, though she never let us go anywhere, and if we didn't get married we could stay with her, and keep on living here till after—after—"

Beattie paused, for it did not seem nice to say bluntly "after she was dead," as she had nearly done.

"Beattie!" Fayette said, reproachfully. "Why, you are calculating like a grandmother of seventy."

"Am I? Well, we will not calculate. I suppose we can earn a living somewhere and somehow, so 'enough for the day,' Fayette. Only people seem to think it is horrid going into a situation. Calculating! It is you who are like a grandmother, sitting there so cool and comfortable, with your hands twisting and twining as if you were one of the Fates—Clytie, or Clio, or whatever her tiresome name is, you know, and her three sisters. Aunt Prue has been very secret all along, and I'm in a thorough good rage. There!"

To emphasise if not to substantiate her words, she threw her little shoe across the room, and went on swinging her foot irritably. Fayette sighed.

"I suppose," she ventured, without raising her eyes from her tatting, which kept her white fingers actively occupied, "Aunt Prue was afraid we might laugh at her."

"And quite right if we had," exclaimed the irrepressible Beattie.

"But then you mustn't grumble if she chose to keep her secret to herself," urged Fayette, timidly, yet strong in a logical entrenchment. "In books, you know, they always seem to think it is very creditable for people to keep their faith through long years."

"Nonsense. They write all sorts of twaddle in sentimental stories. The world isn't a morsel like what the novel-writing people say. The idea of an old fogey like Aunt Prue being in love with another old fogey like—"

Rat-tat at the door of the house. Beattie, who was in a highly nervous, excited state, descended to the somewhat shabby green carpet with an astonished bump. Letters and visitors were sufficiently infrequent at The Sycamores to be appreciated as welcome sensations, bringing some kind of a change into the monotonous, if refined, existence.

Beattie looked about in haste for her shoe, but not finding it, hopped out in the most undignified magpie fashion, almost coming into collision with Patay, the old servant, in the long, stone-paved passage. In the grey-green shadow of the sycamore trees stood the butcher's fat pony, with the butcher's fat assistant sitting on his back. The postman rarely came round this way, so the butcher mostly brought the letters when he called for "orders," thus accommodating all parties. Miss Beattie pounced on the two letters proffered to her, and flew back to the dining-room like a carrier-pigeon.

"Two letters for Aunt Prue," she said, holding one in each hand; "when did Peter Piper bring letters here before? He comes once in six months—when Patay's favourite 'blue moon' shines forth. I wonder what having letters through the post is like. Something like having an offer of marriage in little, I suppose," she added, a slight dash of spite and envy in her accent. "One has a crest on the seal, I do believe, Fay. Is it?"

Fayette examined the seal with a critical eye, but neither of the girls were learned enough to

be able to tell whether it was a real crest or a seal-engraver's fanciful device.

"I wish Aunt Prue would come home," cried Beattie, impatiently. "I am dying to know what is in them, this one especially. The other is a shabby old thing, on horrid paper. There she is. Where's my shoe? My dearest, dearest Fay, do look for it. Aunt is always as cross as two sticks if one isn't neat. Oh, there it is—under that chair. Do fish it out. Thanks, thanks—a bushel of thanks."

The clang of the garden gate opening from the lane at the side of the house announced the advent of Aunt Prue—Miss Ibbotson—and she was presently seen marching up the narrow private walk, followed by the housemaid and a boy, both laden with parcels stoutly bound up in thick brown paper.

A tall, thin, angular woman, with steel grey eyes, was this Aunt Prue, one of the last women in the world to suggest romance. A long, lean back, a stony-looking nose, a meagre, thin-lipped mouth, a prim air and stiff style of walking, and a resolute clinging to the more unattractive fashions of her youth, served to make up an ensemble rather repellent than winning.

Miss Ibbotson entered by the garden door in her usual stiff way. Patzy, the housemaid, put down a medley of parcels, and taking those carried by the boy, placed them also on the long dining-table in the centre of the room. For a moment, full of curiosity, the two girls forgot the letters just received. They eyed the brown paper parcels, stuffed to repletion, no doubt, with wedding flattery, and longed, with the foolish, girlish longing of eighteen, to see them turned inside out.

"Well, girls," said Aunt Prue, taking off her great black straw hat, and beaming mildly with her wooden smile, "I've come back, you see. I am almost sorry I did not ask you to come. It is very close, though, this morning, and hot walking. Here, you youngster, you needn't stop. Give him a glass of cider, Patzy, and let him go."

She threw him a couple of pence, and he disappeared with the servant in the direction of the little kitchen.

"Oh, auntie!" exclaimed Beattie, recollecting the excitement of the previous moment, "Peter Piper brought two letters for you just now, when he came for orders."

"Two letters, child? For me? Give them to me. But I do dislike to hear you call that decent, respectable man by so utterly absurd a nickname. It is a very bad, indeed a most vulgar habit, calling people by those preposterous names."

However, Miss Ibbotson, eager as her nieces had been, looked at the letters. The exterior of each was in itself sufficiently provocative of curiosity and interest. Beattie had first presented the more important-looking missive sealed with a crest, and this Miss Ibbotson examined carefully, obviously puzzled—turning it over, scrutinising paper, postmark, writing, wax; doing anything and everything but open it, after the fashion of people in general, and Mr. Tony Lumpkin in particular.

"A mistake, I fancy," she said, raising her eyebrows. "However, we shall see."

Then she glanced at the second, before opening the first. It was written in an affected, spidery "hand," with pale ink on the shabbiest of shabby blue paper. Aunt Prue gazed at this without any sign of recognition for some moments. Then a terrible flush came into her small faded eyes. She crushed the letter in her fingers, and turned a wild gaze on Fayette.

"No, it is impossible—impossible!" she cried. "The grave cannot give up its dead. Child, child, Fate could not be so cruel."

Fayette, to whom she directed her words, moved a step nearer, though half conscious that Aunt Prue scarcely knew she was speaking aloud. Aunt Prue tore open the letter which had caused her so much emotion, and read it to herself.

Her face grew perfectly pallid as her eyes moved rapidly over the irregularly written lines,

but she did not speak, commencing to read the letter a second time when she had finished it, as if unable to master or to credit its meaning.

Beattie and Fayette were sorely troubled, and totally at a loss to imagine what cause of agitation could have come to Aunt Prue the Imperturbable. The only thing they could think of was that the letter might concern Gervase Fordham, her bridegroom in esse. Beattie's bold, venturesome fancy conjured up the horrible idea that he was about to be proved a base deceiver, and that he had a wife already—or, something else, "quite too awfully awful to think of."

Fayette's more timid imagination and tender heart shrink from devising any theory; nor could she conceive why Aunt Prue had addressed her, though she had always supposed herself to be what the servants called "the favourite."

"Does that letter concern me?" Fayette anxiously asked, the rose colour flushing into her fair face.

"Oh, my poor girl—my Fayette, whom I have loved more than I dream of, during your eighteen years of life—it does concern you," cried Miss Ibbotson. "Do not ask me. I will tell you presently, my dear. Let us see what evil Fortune brings in this other letter."

This tragic, tall style of talk, more alarming even than her agitation, startled the cousins. Aunt Prue was invariably so solemn, so Spartan-like, so stoical, that it had always seemed as if impossible she could be ruffled by anything.

The day when Gervase Fordham had come back, and told her he still loved her, and would gladly make her his wife, she had been utterly tranquil to all appearance, only a shade paler than usual.

Fayette crept nearer to Beattie, and stole an arm about her, while Aunt Prue tore open the second letter. This had an almost equally startling effect with the first. Truly, the evil genius which had laid upon the threshold of the modest little dwelling like a sleeping bloodhound for over twenty years, had roused into wakefulness that sunny June morning.

Every sound came magnified to the hearing of Beattie and Fayette. The lazy buzz of the bees among the flowers, the occasional flutter of the leaves about the curtained doorway and window, the melancholy cooing of the pigeons, the faint, musical tick tick of the marble clock on the antiquated sideboard, the undertones of Patzy Brown's voice as she hummed an old-world tune to herself in the kitchen, the lowing of their favourite white cow in her paddock at the end of the garden—all these familiar, commonplace sounds seemed to repeat themselves in throbbing echoes.

Aunt Prue folded up the second letter, the one with the big wax seal, and replaced it in its pretentious square envelope. Then she looked at the girls with an expression impossible to define. She made one or two attempts to speak, then, leaning back helplessly in her chair, gave way to a violent fit of hysterics.

Neither Beattie or Fayette had ever seen anybody so taken before. They looked at each other in terror, starting from their half embrace. Fayette flew like a frightened bird to the bell, while Beattie screamed for Patzy.

In a few minutes, with the aid of her faithful old servant—for the young girls could only stand by in helpless, ignorant amazement—Aunt Prue recovered her senses. Her first appearance was that of one very much shaken, and very much ashamed of yielding to such nonsensical weakness.

"I am better," she said, raising herself with a dazed, half-stern look, and deathly pale cheeks. "It is nothing. Thanks, my good Patzy. I think I was tired by my walk, and I have had startling news."

Patzy retired. It was "only redeklus nonsense," she thought, her mistress pretending to be tired by a pleasant stroll on a lovely June morning, along a road she had taken any time these five-and-thirty years, and more, of her past humdrum life. As for the bad news, that

was another affair. This excellent, faithful serving woman hated to be mystified, if the truth must be told, though she would have scorned to listen at a door ajar or read an open letter.

"And," she murmured to herself, "if there is one thing aggravates me to that degree more than another, it's to be called 'my good Patzy,' though of course Miss Prue has no idea it goes against the grain like."

"Let us go into the garden," said Aunt Prue, still with a grey hue over her face, taking the letters in her hand. "I am stifled. Beattie, there is none but good news for you, my dear. But for Fay—my little dainty floweret—I am afraid bad days are in store for you," and a dry sob came up in her throat as she spoke.

The three passed into the old-fashioned garden, a wilderness of beauty, which a floriculturist of modern ideas would have despised. Miss Ibbotson went a few steps, then sat down on a rustic seat under a great spreading sycamore tree. The girls sat on either side pale with anxiety.

"Beattie, Fayette, no doubt you think me have ever thoughtless, cold, hard and reserved, perhaps unfeeling," said Aunt Prue. "Maybe I am all that. I hate scenes, though I have succeeded in making one with a vengeance just now. I don't believe in fine feelings, sickly sentiment. I have done my duty by you. I have not been bound to give you such love as you might have reasonably looked for had I been your mother instead of your aunt. Nay, I am not Fayette's aunt!"

"Aunt Prue!" cried Fayette, catching a deep breath of amazement, almost of consternation.

"No, I am thankful to say that your mother is only a second cousin, not a sister, and your father was no relation whatever of mine."

"My mother is—"

"Is! You thought your mother must be dead because you have never heard of her. Nobody has ever told you anything about her. I fancied she was dead. This letter, written only yesterday, comes from her. She misses you!"

"My mother?"

"Ay, you conjure up all the romantic stuff in prose and poetry you have ever read. I will say nothing about her. The Lord forbid that I should ever sow seeds of discord or mistrust between mother and child. But I don't think she can have much maternal affection to spare for you, or she could never have left you to imagine her dead all these years of your young life. Cold as I have been, I don't doubt you have had more affection from me than you are likely to have from Margaret Lascelles. She is poor, she admits that."

"My mother!" again murmured the rapturous Fayette.

"The sentiment will very soon be knocked out of you, Fay, my dear, unless Margaret has changed remarkably in seventeen years. She will come to see you to-morrow."

Fayette clasped her little tremulous hands. She could scarcely credit the news that had come like a wonderful revelation.

"It happens very opportunely for me," pursued Miss Ibbotson, easily falling again into her habitual wooden way. "Of course, it was not to be expected that when I had brought up both of you with the utmost care, and you ought to be able to provide for yourselves—it was not to be expected, I say, that I should; entirely sacrifice myself, to be left, no doubt, to utter loneliness in half-a-dozen years' time, when some eligible young men should present themselves."

Beattie and Fayette blushed rosy red, but did not offer any remark.

"I was worrying myself nearly to death thinking what could be done, because I must have made some arrangement, for every reason. So now I am clear of all further responsibility. I am sorry for you, Fay; you will have to face poverty with a woman ten times—ten thousand times more ice-like than I am, who has without doubt merely some speculation in view, or she would not bother herself with a next-to-helpless girl. Beattie's father has suddenly come into



a rich inheritance. Here are the letters. Read them."

Poor little tender-hearted Fayette seized on her mother's letter with feverish eagerness, and pressed it to her lips. It was brief and cold in tone, and did not contain one message to the young girl herself. It ran:

"MY DEAR COUSIN,

"You will, of course, be considerably astonished to learn that I am yet in the land of the living. I am surprised to find myself yet in this vale of tears after all the hardships I have been obliged to endure. I am really myself, for nobody would gain much by pretending to my identity. I am poor, left forlorn and sad. My daughter, whom I threw on your late dear mother's charity, is still living. I know. To-morrow I shall come to take her from you. I am unable to say how deeply grateful I am for your goodness in keeping her all these years, when you might have very reasonably sent her to the workhouse. In haste, believe me to be,

"Yours truly,

"MARGARET LASCELLES.

"P.S.—I choose to sign thus that you may recognise your correspondent."

A strange letter surely from a mother who had not seen her only child since the days of infancy—and that child a girl. A chill struck to the heart of Fayette as she read the cold lines; yet still there was an irresistible glamour in the thought of a mother. She raised her eyes, to meet by chance or instinct those of Beattie.

Beattie's face was flushed with a brilliant rose red; her eyes were fairly gleaming with excitement. She opened her lips to speak, when Patsy Brown came ambling out from the house, a model of prim, ostentatious deference.

"Mr. Fordham, if you please, ma'am," she said, very frigidly to Miss Ibbotson, with a marked exaggeration of ceremony, for she felt piqued at being so cavalierly treated, having all the presumptuous notions of an old, favoured servant.

She then marched off, her nose in the air. Miss Ibbotson started up, instinctively smoothing down the dark hair on her temples, where it had begun to grow rather thin. She went into the house by the wide shady porch leading into the pretty little morning room, and the girls were left alone.

Beattie sat down by Fayette, who offered her the letter she had received from Aunt Prue, then laid her gentle head on Beattie's shoulder to indulge in a mild burst of tears. The radiant eyes of Beattie grew many shades less exultant as she read the frigid lines. But she thought it wisest to say nothing, only holding Fayette closer in a sisterly embrace.

"Let me read you mine," she said.

Fortune, so cruel to Fayette, had laid some of her richest gifts at the feet of the splendid Beattie. Her father, who had been obliged from long-continued poverty and unhappy circumstances to leave his child in the care of Miss Ibbotson, his sister-in-law, had lately succeeded to the title and large estates of his elder brother. He entered into no particulars, knowing that Miss Ibbotson was well acquainted with his history and general affairs, but he promised a brilliant future to his only daughter.

"How strange it all seems," exclaimed Beattie, a far-off look in her velvety brown eyes. "But I am so sorry we shall be parted."

"It seems like a dream," said Fayette; "the very light somehow seems different."

"To fancy that I took these bits of paper as I did from that fat old Peter Piper, and never imagined what was in them. Really, I hope I shan't have many more surprises; I don't think they would agree with me," Beattie added.

"My mother" (Fayette pronounced these two magical words in a tremulous tone) "comes for me to-morrow. But what will Aunt Prue do about her wedding? We must come back, I suppose?"

Beattie did not seem to hear her.

"We must write to each other," she said,

suddenly and irrelevantly; "and you must come and visit me. We must never let our affection for each other grow cold. You promise, Fayette?"

Fayette pressed Beattie silently in her arms, a mist of tears expressing the feelings for which she could find no words.

"Perhaps you know," Beattie went on, "your mother may come to live near us, and then we shall see one another every day."

And so on, ad infinitum, like two innocent children building castles in the air, or wonderful cities out of sand on the sea-shore, the girls ran on laying plans, making baseless speculations, wondering, hoping, fearing, blowing those airy bubbles of fancy, so radiant for the moment as they glitter in the sunshine of unreality.

Yes. To-morrow! Hitherto these girls, these fragile buds of humanity, had never had cause to look forward to the great and mystical to-morrow for any more exciting reason than the promise of a new gown, or an invitation to some petty humdrum party.

And now, as by the flash of a wizard's wand, the future had all changed. But, as so often happens on the chequered boards of the intricate game we call Life, the wrong people were getting into the wrong places.

Patsy put out a very sour, grim visage, surrounded by an inappropriate framework of creeping, clustering leaves, as she stood in a leafy archway forming a masked approach to her kitchen. Patsy was thoroughly out of humour. The worthy soul always felt aggrieved when mystified, and never sufficiently patient to wait for the explanation which experience might have taught her could not fail to come.

Patsy and Miss Ibbotson were very like, only one was a genteel person, and the other a humble, faithful, and attached individual. Miss Ibbotson was desperately inquisitive; so was Patsy. Miss Ibbotson loved a dish of gossip; so did her maid.

Both were cynical, both were disappointed spinsters, on the erroneous side of forty. Both relished a sharp, rattling interchange of quarrelsome words, and neither objected to an easy reconciliation.

"Here's a pretty state of things," Patsy growled, with vehement emphasis, and the severely classical aspect of an early Christian martyr. "Here's old Mr. Arundell and young Mr. Percy Darvill just this very moment come, and they'll stop to dinner as sure as I've a head on my shoulders. Of course, Mr. Gervase Fordham's certain sure to stop, because Miss Ibbotson's safe to ask him, and Miss Ibbotson can't give no thought to a thing, of course, when he's here, and what to do I don't know. I'm in that flurry and worry of mind, I feel as lost as one of the babes in the wood; and Miss Ibbotson says I'm to come to you, Miss Beattie, as she's talking to the gentlemen. So what to do, I'm sure I do not know."

A pinky tint spread over the handsome face of Miss Beattie.

"You know better what to do than anybody else in the house," she replied, rising.

"My goodness gracious, it's nigh on eleven o'clock. How am I to get anything in the world to eat?" demanded Patsy, who was determined on being completely and entirely disagreeable. "There isn't a scrap in the house, only the cold leg of mutton from yesterday, and I'd made a bit of a tart just big enough for us four and the girl; and I know Mr. Gervase can't abide cold meat, and old Mr. Arundell abominates hash, and curry likewise. So there?"

There was nothing Patsy more delighted in than details of domestic economy. As a general rule she loved, as Caleb Balderstone might have loved, to make affairs so appear that her mistress should be supposed to enjoy an ample rather than a restricted income.

To-day, however, she was resolved to exercise neither wit nor ingenuity in the service of those who had injured and insulted her—her object being to make them remember how dependent they were on her goodwill and cleverness. Miss Beattie, who was full of courage and high spirit and a favourite of the irate Patsy, marched

straight up to her, and said, coolly, after the fashion of a lion-tamer:

"What's the matter, Patsy?"

"My goodness! Matter! I don't know what you mean, no more than nothing at all."

"Yes you do. Why are you so disagreeable? Have I, or Fayette here, or auntie, done anything you don't like?"

"I don't like? What do it sinnify what the likes of me likes or don't like, I should like to know?"

"Come," said Beattie, still with her half masterful, half coaxing air, "I think I know what it is. I don't know if aunt will approve my speaking of it, but you must soon learn. We are going away—Fayette, and your old enemy Beattie—maybe to-morrow."

Patsy started back, her face full of such varying and contending emotions, that Beattie nearly yielded to a sudden impetus to laughter.

"You—and Miss Fayette, too? Never! Was that what was in them letters, then?"

"Yes. You shall know all about it by-and-bye. It will seem strange, won't it, Patsy, being all parted and drifted away to different places? You will not have two bothering girls to tease you, to laugh at you, to quarrel with you, to praise your pies and your ironing, to be sorry for you when you are not well and vexed about things."

Patsy did not answer, but leaned against the side of the trellised framework where she had been standing, and whipped her print apron over her head. In a minute or two the girls heard her gurgling in an odd sort of a way, and became conscious that she was weeping—a disconsolate Rachel at rehearsal.

It was a difficult task to comfort her; but at last her tranquillity was somewhat restored, and she retired, Achilles like, within the precincts of her kitchen to consider her forces and the state of the commissariat.

Miss Ibbotson was only the nominal head of the house. Inasmuch as invariably after making a feeble pretence of issuing orders and instructions, she was perforce obliged to give way to Patsy, and submit to be guided by her superior knowledge and wisdom.

Fayette went towards the drawing-room with slow, thoughtful steps, lingering to pet the white and grey pigeons which came fluttering about her as courtiers encircle their queen. She knew them all and had a name for each, as if they were children; and, for the moment, she felt as if it would be harder to part with these darlings than with all besides.

Beattie made a faint pretence of accompanying her, but suddenly fled off at a tangent, darting up the sombre, old-fashioned oak staircase to her own room, the pure colour in her cheeks deepened to a tell-tale carnation.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE HISTORY OF AN OLD GIRL.

Marriage, to maids, is like a war to men;  
The battle causes fear, but the sweet hopes  
Of winning at the last still draws 'em in.

LEE.

FRIENDS, neighbours, and acquaintances had settled that a romantic story had come to a tardy finish in the case of Prudence Ibbotson and Gervase Fordham. These lovers had apparently been tenderly attached in their early youth, had been "all but" or "as good as" engaged. For two years they had been devoted to one another, after the most approved pattern of ultra-poetic lovers. Then something happened—the lovers quarrelled, or some untoward incident occurred. Gervase Fordham went away, and Miss Prue Ibbotson was left, or voluntarily chose, to wear the green willow.

Miss Prue had later received one or two ineligible offers, which she declined with scanty thanks. One or two attempts she essayed to alter her condition in life, nearly succeeding once. Most women are naturally desirous of being married, but Miss Ibbotson was one of those who are foolishly determined on changing their state of life at almost any hazard.

People gave her credit for being "a remarkably sensible woman," "full of sound common sense," "thoroughly practical," and admired her for being "just like a mother" to the two young children who had been placed in her care by pressure of circumstances. But in reality she was discontented and inclined to be sour; half jealous and envious of the fresh youth and beauty of Beattie and Fayette; sorely mortified to find herself verging towards the lowest depth of elderly spinsterhood; in a cold rage at being condemned to a state she abhorred—that of an old maid.

So far from her early blighted love affair being romantic, a more tepidly prosaic story could hardly have been imagined. Gervase Fordham was as cool and as calculating, as incapable of feeling or inspiring the master passion as herself. He had certainly rather admired Miss Ibbotson's hard, frigid style of good looks, and entertained no preference for any other girl, but his chief idea had undoubtedly gravitated in a mercenary direction.

His prospects were only moderate, but still, they were respectable. An influential friend had promised him an appointment in one of the Colonies at a tolerably good salary. Miss Ibbotson had apparently excellent expectations from an aunt, and distant expectations from her mother, at whose death she would inherit about twelve thousand pounds.

Gervase Fordham did not believe in any of the rubbish authors choose to write in books about love. He had never seen, known, or heard of anyone who had suffered from the disorder. Marriage was a kind of partnership—a hybrid between a lottery and a business speculation. He was then four-and-twenty, old enough to be able to judge what was best, that is, most advantageous, for himself. Not a doubt crossed his mind that Prudence Ibbotson would joyfully accede to his propositions.

The young man had not been mistaken in his anticipations so far as Miss Prue's pleased acceptance of his suit—or offers, or whatever his advances might be termed. He coloured his prospects rather more highly than actual fact warranted, and she dreamt of being at some no very distant epoch a Consul's lady, a little Queen. Prudence liked Gervase; he was tall, with a fine, effective-looking figure, and well-cultivated black whiskers, and admirably trained shining black eyes.

Her vanity was flattered by the idea of being "engaged, and soon to be married;" she had been taught by a cynical mother, who had made an unhappy, ill-assorted marriage, that love was a myth, a mistake, an absurdity, which might perhaps seize people as the measles or influenza might, but that those were lucky who escaped it. A contradictory line of argument, of the sour grapes school; still, the seeds suited the ground they were thrown on.

So Prudence tried to blush on the interesting occasion, and to look bashfully happy, while thinking how she should dress herself on her bridal day. She said yes to everything proposed by Gervase, and felt rather proud when informing her mother of what he had said. Mrs. Ibbotson remarked quietly:

"Oh, very well, my dear. He seems a very unobjectionable young man. But he must have some more defined position and income before you engage yourselves."

The two young people continued to meet frequently, to walk about together on every available occasion, to be all but betrothed lovers. Unhappily, nearly two years drifted away, and the promises made in high quarters to Gervase gave no signs of fulfilment. However, no other offers matrimonial tempted Prudence to swerve from her implied troth, and the silent months still glided on.

At last Gervase was summoned to London. He wrote a few affectionate letters to his Prue, but suddenly his affection chilled. The truth was, having obtained the promised situation, he ascertained that the salary was far from what he had anticipated. He managed to find out that Prue's expectations from her aunt were in reality baseless. He also met a fine looking girl with money, truly her own, as he

ascertained by going to Somerset House and reading her grandmother's will.

Prudence was too proud to press for an explanation. The letters ceased to come. She ceased, very properly, to write. One morning she saw Gervase's departure announced in a line at the bottom of a column in the "Times." Pained and mortified she certainly was, but bore her secret anguish with the calm courage of a Red Indian at the stake.

The fine-looking girl proved to be a gay deceiver. Craftily she had lured on the unhappy, the unsuspecting Gervase with the view of hastening the dilatory advances of "another young man," and then laughed in his face. Just before Gervase went on his journey to London, Beattie's father had sent her to Mrs. Ibbotson, his wife, that lady's elder daughter, being dead, and he himself preparing to go to India.

Some months later Fayette had been added to the domestic circle. Prudence was too much occupied in her own affairs to think or wonder about these babies, and she did not realise how strange their advent was till long after. In course of time Mrs. Ibbotson died.

Prudence found herself in a not unpleasant position, only she objected to being hampered by the girls. She never relinquished her hope of one day marrying, though every creature who knew her had settled that she was tranquilly resigned to her solitary fate.

Some months ago her fixed determination had been to marry the amiable Dr. Langley, who had lost his wife some ten years since. There was no hope of her success in this object, but this she would not admit.

It was at the house of this kindly-natured and urbane-mannered physician that Miss Prue had again, to her great astonishment, encountered her early lover. Gervase Fordham had returned still single, still looking much the same, only larger, stronger, more bumptious in manner.

He expressed no particular shame or emotion of any kind—simply ignored the past. He was now well-to-do, though not rich, and his hopes of the consulship were high. At first he was dazzled by the splendid beauty of Beattie Allenby, and nearly played the fool for the only time in his life.

The girl was, perhaps happily for Gervase Fordham, supremely unconscious of the impression made upon the stranger who to her was totally uninteresting, and he speedily saw the absurdity of the plans he dreamt of laying. Miss Prue, crafty as some old spider, finding she made no way in the Langley sieges, turned her batteries on Gervase Fordham.

She gently gave him to understand that she had never married because all these years she had cherished an unhappy, blighted passion for himself. The idea at first amused, then gained on him, and he began to think. When a gentleman finds himself constantly "thinking" about a lady, he may as well lay down his arms and surrender at discretion.

Miss Ibbotson had between three and four hundred a year. Gervase Fordham had himself nearly double that, from his salary and a small private fortune. The united figures would form a moderately respectable income. When, as Gervase still further urged to himself, a man is verging on fifty, it is as well to hasten his movements if he would not be left to a solitary old age.

Prue was still passably good-looking, he thought; he somehow fancied she was decidedly better looking than in her girlhood, for she carried herself with more dignity, dressed in more finished taste and more expensively—was, everyone must agree, the very woman for a Consul's wife.

The end might have been foreseen from the beginning. Gervase resumed some of his old attentions. Miss Ibbotson was gratified—sighed a little, tried to blush sometimes, cast down her eyes, and looked at once dignified and sad, as if memory—too, fond and clinging memory, had its pleasures if it had its woes.

Miss Ibbotson again was unusually well read for a lady, and as she could make good use of

her intellectual stores, was a really entertaining companion. She could speak French as fluently as her mother tongue, and this was a useful as well as ornamental acquisition.

Gervase Fordham made up his mind. He liked Prudence Ibbotson from old associations, and from present respect and semi-admiration. With diplomatic art he had quietly ignored the past, but when he came to make his offer, he felt himself obliged to refer to it.

The eventful interview took place in the old-fashioned garden attached to The Sycamores. Both elderly lovers, if lovers they might be called, were in a curious state between nervousness and watchful caution.

Gervase floundered a good deal. He was shabby enough to pretend that he had gone away years ago because jealous of Langley, the doctor, who had just come to the neighbourhood. This he fancied would make a plausible excuse, and flatter Miss Prue's vanity. Prue knew perfectly well that he scarcely expected her to believe the transparent fiction, but she smiled and simpered and made a feint of pardoning his mistrust.

All this is very stupid and not edifying. The result was that Prudence accepted the tardily offered opportunity of becoming Mrs. Fordham, and the marriage was to take place as soon as the necessary arrangements could be made, Gervase's leave of absence being short. The chief difficulty with Prudence had been the question—what to do with the girls? This had worried and tormented her "more than enough," as she said and thought.

She liked her young companions very well, in spite of that half smothered envy of their youth and beauty, and did not care either to throw them on the world, utterly inexperienced as they were, or to brave the opinion of her small circle of friends, neighbours and acquaintances, by acting heartlessly.

As for getting them married on short notice, that was clearly impossible. Never was place so deplorably destitute of marriageable men as Cricklemore-cum-Starkles. It is a pity this explanatory history is not more interesting. It is about as charming and exciting as the scene where two be-plushed stage servants come on to drag in a carpet for the next act.

(To be Continued.)

It is estimated that, taking into account the smaller theatres of the suburbs, the annual amount spent in Paris in play-going in prosperous years cannot be less than one million sterling.

It has been finally settled that the Easter Monday Volunteer Review is to be held at Brighton. A bit of the downs, four miles by two, has been found available, and the railway gives a return ticket for a week for 2s. 6d. Brighton is to be attacked from Lewes, and that it will be taken is the hope of every lodging-house keeper.

It is believed that Her Majesty's impending visit to Germany will be undertaken with the object of being present at the confirmation of her grand-daughter, Princess Victoria of Hesse, eldest daughter of the Grand Duke of Hesse. The young lady, who completes her seventeenth year on the 5th of April, will be confirmed shortly before Easter, when the Queen is expected on a visit to Darmstadt.

A somewhat foolhardy act has been performed at Calais by an actress who entered the lion's cage at the menagerie, and there recited Victor Hugo's "Caravane." Her musical voice evidently had the traditional effect of "soothing the savage beast," as the lions never attempted to interrupt her performance.

It is currently believed that a woman is a hard thing to see through. And so is her hat at the opera. An ingenious manager has made a drop curtain representing an enormous bonnet, with sprays of flowers and drooping plumes. This is let down on the play early in the first scene. It is a prettily conceived hint.





[HIS LORDSHIP'S OPINION.]

## AILEEN'S LOVE STORY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

*"Christine's Revenge; or, O'Hara's Wife,"**"The Mystery of His Love," &c., &c.*

## CHAPTER XXI.

## THE "GALWAY FLOWERET."

For love is like a careless child,  
 Forgetting promise past;  
 He is blind or deaf when'er he list;  
 His faith is never past.

"Your mistress has chosen to humiliate me in your eyes, my pretty Aileen, for no reason, for no especial spite, only in the caprice of the moment, or perhaps it may be that her vanity craved a witness to her triumph. She wanted you to see the start of rage and despair with which I should receive the news of her approaching marriage with my greatest enemy, my brother, and she thought it would be as good as a play—good enough to amuse her maid as well as herself. Will you tell me if you feel any happier after the scene? You too are pretty enough to break men's hearts and blight their lives. Tell me, have you learnt a lesson that you mean to profit by?"

"Mr. Athlone, look at me—read my face. Do I look amused, sir, or as if I really thought my lady had done a clever thing?"

Aileen's face was white as death, and her eyes flashed indignantly. Edward Athlone, who had hitherto regarded Aileen simply as the most beautiful country girl he had ever seen in the whole course of his life, now was struck by the intense expression that shone in her face. He passed his hand over his own eyes as if to clear away some absurd or harrowing thought from his brain, and then he looked again at Aileen and said, with a half laugh:

"I have had a shock—I have awakened from a dream. First of all I hoped and fancied that yonder fair lady was a goddess among woman-kind. Now it seems to me that she has sunk very low; but surely she has not sunk beneath her fair sisters, but only to their level, so that you, among the rest, have no more pity or honour or shame than she has, and yet I think I read something different in your eyes. Tell me, what do you think of the Lady Emily, and what do you think of me?"

"I think the Lady Emily has not the power of loving anything save pomp and pleasure, Mr. Athlone."

"Ha! ha!" he laughed; "the pomps and vanities of this wicked world. Most of us love them in some shape, pretty Aileen; but you think she would not have loved me even if she had become my wife?"

"Not as you deserve to be loved," answered Aileen; "not as a true-souled girl would love you, sir, making you the hero of her life, watching for your voice and for your footstep."

The girl's lovely, pale, earnest face, her eyes turned up towards the wintry heavens, her clasped hands, the deep, impassioned pathos of her voice, struck Athlone suddenly with a new and strange sensation. Love? Could it be that this country maiden loved him as he had dreamed of being loved?

For a moment he admitted to himself that whatever might be the consequences that should follow on such a state of things, that it was nevertheless very sweet to be thus loved by a creature

Fair in form, and warm  
 Yet pure in heart.

as was Aileen. The next moment he had driven the thought away as unworthy of him. The wound which the society beauty had inflicted yet rankled in his heart.

He told himself, indeed, that as long as he lived he should never again have a heart worth any woman's accepting. Emily Fairleigh had spoilt his life, and Aileen, beautiful as she was,

lacked such culture as would make it delightful to pass his life at her side.

In judging thus he judged unfairly, for there slumbered in Aileen powers that he did not dream of. Her spirit could have soared to heights which the Lady Emily's could never reach. The slightest culture would quickly develop the exquisite and innate refinement which was the essence of Aileen's nature.

But Edward Athlone knew nothing of this. To him Aileen was but a true-souled, honest-hearted, and most beautiful peasant, a lovely model head for the Academy; but he was not in the mood for painting now. He was in the mood rather for anathematising all womankind and mankind, and he was determined to put the seas between himself and the fair Emily as soon as possible.

He stooped suddenly and pressed his lips to Aileen's forehead as she could prevent him or knew of his intention. In another moment he had leaped into his saddle, for his horse was tethered to a tree beside them. The door in the shrubbery wall Aileen had left open. It was close to where they stood, and without another word he rode out into the lane and galloped away.

And Aileen? The kiss he had given her seemed to have set her soul on fire. Her heart beat, her brain reeled. Was she angry or enraptured? She could not have answered that question. She stepped into the lane and watched him till he reached a bend in the road. Then he turned round, and seeing her watching him still he took off his hat and bowed; then the horse sprang forward, and he was lost to Aileen's sight.

Aileen has been at Athlone Castle for a week, and she has had a duller and quieter existence, although the house is full of the noise and racket of two dozen gay visitors, than she had had at that much more soberly conducted country mansion, Inverrag. The reasons for this are simple but strong ones. First of all, the Lady Emily is so taken up with the round of amusements that

fill the days and more than half the nights at Athlone Castle that she has no time for confidences with her pretty maid, and Miss Godfrey is as watchful as a cat.

We do not mean the least disrespect to that most worthy lady in thus describing the case she took of Aileen, but she was a model of watchfulness where the new maid was concerned. She stipulated that she was to spend all her spare time with her (Miss Godfrey) in her own apartments, which looked into the courtyard, and though Aileen had now been a week at the castle, she had not once seen Lord Athlone.

Now, it would have struck many shrewd persons as most extraordinary that the gay young nobleman, who had made such a bold attempt to capture Aileen, and who, urged on by rage and jealousy against her, had instigated his father to serve the notice of eviction upon the Darrell family, and seize their farm stock for rent—that Richard Athlone had never once attempted to see the girl about whom there had been what the old earl, his father, called “such a confounded fuss.”

True she was kept out of his way by that “old tabby Godfrey,” as he irreverently styled his mother’s confidential maid; but my Lord Richard was never one to stand on ceremony, and if he had really wished to see Aileen he would have contrived to have done so in spite of a dozen Miss Godfreys, but he never did attempt to do so.

Aileen spent her time sewing or reading in Miss Godfrey’s parlour. She shared her sleeping apartment with her. She never went outside the castle gates. Shooting, and riding occupied the fair ladies and noble gentlemen guests during the mornings whenever the weather was fine. In the evening there were dances, private theatricals, concerts, continual banquetting and feasting, much flirtation, all kinds of gaiety and revelry, and among the gentlemen billiard matches and betting on approaching races. Hearts and fortunes, too, were lost and won during those winter festivities at Athlone Castle.

Rumours of these gay doings reached Aileen in Miss Godfrey’s apartments, but she saw literally nothing of them, and it almost seemed to her as if Lady Emily had forgotten her existence. And then all at once came a whirligig of strange events into the girl’s life. She was sitting one evening sewing as usual in Miss Godfrey’s room when that worthy lady rushed in in a state of excitement.

“Lady Emily wants you, Aileen. Come with me,” she exclaimed. “We are all disputing about the wedding dress—whether it is to be ivory coloured satin or pure white brocade; and Lady Emily told me to come and fetch you, whereat that tall, pale thing Thompson turned up her nose, and it isn’t by any means a pretty one. That woman is spiteful and jealous, and hates you, Aileen. Did you know that?”

“No,” Aileen answered, and wonder filled her blue eyes. “How have I offended her?”

“Oh, you haven’t offended her. She is jealous because Lady Emily took such a fancy to you; indeed, you ought to be grateful to Lady Emily. She has made my Lord Athlone persuade the earl to withdraw the notice of eviction which was served on your friends at Killallen Farm, all their stock has been restored to them, a new lease of the farm granted, one hundred pounds of the rent cancelled, and five years allowed them to pay the rest in.”

“Yes,” answered Aileen, “I know all that, but I have not seen any of my friends. I am not aware whether or not they know that I am here.”

“They are sure to know it,” Miss Godfrey answered. “News of that sort travels so quickly, but it seems like a break between you, for they have never asked a question about you, and your beau, Dermot, has sailed for New York. That I did not like to tell you, for I thought it would vex you, but I heard it last week.”

Instead of being vexed Aileen felt relieved to find that Dermot had left the “distressful country.” She asked Miss Godfrey presently what she meant by choosing the wedding dress,

and if Lady Emily were really engaged to be married to Lord Athlone.

“Yes, they are to be married from here in a fortnight, and they say they don’t care for a wedding tour this bitter weather. The London season has just begun, and they are going to my lord’s house in Belgrave Square for a few weeks; at least it is the earl’s house, but he will give it up to the newly married pair for a time, and Lord Athlone hopes to be returned as Member for West Upperton, a Surrey borough; the house will be one of the gayest this season, what with Lady Emily’s fortune and all. The uncle in India will pay down the half of it, a hundred and fifty thousand pounds, on the wedding day, and the English lawyers are coming here to settle all. You are to go to London with the bride and bridegroom, you and Thompson. When once my lord is married I shall feel safe, for reformed rakes always make the best husbands, so they say, and as for you, why he has not once attempted to see you since you have been here.”

“No,” said Aileen.

And then she followed Miss Godfrey along corridors and up staircases into the spacious and splendid chamber, where the lovely bride expectant, and a gay bevy of expectant bridesmaids, fluttered about among silks, satins and velvets like butterflies amid summer flowers.

“Oh, Aileen, here she comes!” cried Lady Emily to her friends. “Now have I not told you all what a beauty she was; what a pity she’s not a lady, and we could dress her in white and scarlet as a bridesmaid?”

There were many highly born damsels on a visit at Athlone Castle, and they all turned very admiring glances on Aileen in her plain dark dress. She hung her lovely head and blushed. Suddenly there sounded in the next room a firm masculine step. The young ladies broke into rippling peals of laughter.

“It’s Athlone,” cried Lady Emily. “He wants to see the dresses or something.”

And his lordship of Athlone did in fact walk with a leisurely and firm step into the room where the ladies were examining the various textures and discussing the costume of the bride expectant. Lord Richard’s hands were in his pockets; he wore a conventional costume. There was about him a great air of nonchalance—a languid indifference that in the opinion of many sat ill on a youthful bridegroom expectant, who should have been fired with ardour and enthusiasm by the near approach of the day of his happiness, and also by the presence of his lovely promised bride.

But Lord Athlone sauntered on still with his hands in his pockets. He looked handsome as an Adonis, many of the young ladies thought, those who admired fair-complexioned men, with long golden moustaches and sleepy blue eyes and sweeping eyelashes.

But the acute reader of human faces would have found in the handsome countenance of the heir to the earldom that mixture of cruelty and effeminacy that one associates with some of the later Roman emperors. Athwart the beauty of the noble’s face, there shot at times a gleam of ferocity and cruelty, and there came into the soft blue eyes a glitter like that in the eyes of a savage and stealthy beast which lurks and prowls and watches for its prey.

Lord Athlone passed close by the side of Aileen without taking the smallest notice of her. Not a quiver of his eyelid betrayed the fact that he had ever seen her before; nor had Lady Emily the faintest idea at this time of such a thing.

“What do you think, Dick?” she said, carelessly to the young lord. “Shall I wear ivory satin or pure white silk?”

“Ivory satin, and some of your awfully big diamonds,” he answered, promptly.

Lady Emily’s lovely face flushed to a deeper pink. Few things are more subtle and deceitful than the human heart. Emily Fairleigh was one of those strange, capricious beings who may be said not to know their own minds. She had fancied that she loved Edward Athlone, then she had discovered that her so-called love was of the very flimsiest material—a species of

rubbish that was not even worth the name of regard.

She had then allowed herself to be betrothed to Lord Athlone, thinking and believing that she was perfectly indifferent to him, and that she only desired to be a countess and lead the fashions and give the tone to London society. And then she discovered all at once that there was something she admired very much in this languid, selfish, graceful man.

His sort of cleverness was more akin to her own than the keen intellect of his brother had ever been. She was now affianced to him, and with a positive show of indifference on either side. He and she made game of the idea of love, called it apathyism to each other, and laughed at those sentimental noodles who went away to spend their honeymoons in Alpine solitudes or at lovely but sequestered sea-side villages.

No, they were going in for “life” and change, and as much fun as they could possibly extract out of life, and yet so unreasonable, so capricious is a nature like the Lady Emily’s that she positively began in her heart of hearts—though she would not have admitted it for the world—to wish that Richard were not so awfully matter-of-fact and so cold-hearted.

“He could make love like a hero in an opera,” she said to herself, “if he chose. True, I have told him I hated to be made a fuss with, and I thought I did, but somehow I wish he liked me better. At any rate he does not care for anyone else. No, I certainly should think any woman whom he really loved worthy of anything—death almost. What ridiculous thoughts are these. Has the near approach of my marriage then made me crazy?”

And all these thoughts rushed through the mind of Lady Emily like lightning flashes when Lord Athlone, without even looking at her, said that she had better wear ivory satin and some of her awfully big diamonds. The Nabob, her uncle, had indeed sent her over a box of most precious jewels—diamonds as large as hazel nuts, sapphires, rubies and emeralds still larger, all set in exquisite Indian virgin gold.

These ornaments would doubtless be the talk of the approaching London season, and they would be an advertisement of the wealth of the bride. And all at once the thought smote the proud heart of the beauty almost like a curse.

“He marries me only for greed.”

She had known it before; she had known it all along, and yet the fact came to her now for the first time like a revelation. Still she only laughed and said, gaily:

“Well, Dick, I will follow your advice; I will wear the ivory satin and the great diamonds. Shall I have the skirt looped up with white camellias?”

“Oh, I can’t be bothered about trimmings,” he answered; “I know nothing whatever about them; I hate them, I think.”

And as if by a sort of instinct his eyes travelled in the direction of the great inlaid wardrobe, near to which stood—surrounded by a crowd of milliners and dressmakers, several of whom had come over to Ireland to make the glorious wedding garments of the lovely bride—that young servant of Lady Emily, Aileen Moore.

“I hate trimmings,” repeated Lord Athlone.

And there stood Aileen in the plainest of black cashmere skirts, with a white linen collar round her slender throat, and a knot of scarlet ribbon fastening it, as simply clad a damsel as the strictest ascetic could desire to see, and yet while the blonde beauty gazed on the glowing loveliness of her maid, she felt for the first time in her life that her own charms were eclipsed—ebon hair and pencilled brows, peach bloom cheeks and long black lashes, gray-blue eyes and lips like cherries. Lady Emily bit her own lip.

“I wonder what he thinks of her,” she said to herself. “Well, what do you think of the Galway floweret?” she said to her betrothed, with a gay laugh.

Lord Athlone looked round languidly upon his future wife as he answered:



"If you mean the young person in black—" "Of course I do," the young bride elect answered, sharply. "Who else should I mean; neither of those hollow-eyed London women who have come here to make the wedding dresses?"

"Well," said Lord Athlone, "I think if she were dressed in black velvet and cherry-coloured satin she would look—"

He paused a moment.

"And how would she look?" asked Lady Emily, sharply.

"She would look awfully nice," drawled his languid lordship.

"Dear me, your stock of complimentary epithets is not a large one," said Lady Emily Fairleigh. And then she added: "Indeed, Lord Athlone, you ought hardly to remain in these rooms."

"Is it unconventional?" he asked, carelessly. "Well, I will take my departure," which he accordingly did.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE BIJOU VILLA.

My lady is jealous. Beware!  
And my lord is a man of the day.  
He thinks this poor maiden is fair,  
And he goes on his way.

OLD SONG.

The wedding is over; it took place in the little parish church of Clondell, and all the village street was carpeted, and arches of evergreens spanned the humble roadway. It was not the villagers who had busied themselves to do honour to their future lord.

No, for the Athlones were cordially detested along the whole of the countryside, and even as a bridegroom, with his peerless bride beside him, Lord Athlone would not have been safe in the street of his native village, unless a strong body of the constabulary force had been present.

Workmen from the castle made all the decorative arches, at which the poor starving peasants gazed in a species of half sulky awe. The earl, however, sent beef and plum pudding and ale into every house in Clondell on the wedding day, and coats and blankets were sent out liberally by the countess.

As for the lovely bride, she had had all sorts of schemes in her head at one time—schemes to make herself popular and beloved by this "interesting peasantry," as she called them, but now she had changed her mind, or rather her mind was filled with other thoughts.

She said now that she was in a desperate hurry to get back to London and begin the gaieties of the season. She took little notice of Aileen, indeed her manner had changed so much of late towards her, that the girl felt sore at heart.

She was far from attributing this coldness of her mistress to its real cause, for Aileen, still cherishing in her heart the memory of Edward Athlone, and believing also that Lady Emily must prefer him to every other in the world—Aileen fancied that somehow or other Lady Emily had divined her secret, had learnt that it was on his account she had left her home, and so was jealous. Jealous! Poor Aileen! Yes, and with a jealousy that grew day by day, although it had nothing at that time to live on but the suspicions of her own heart and the whispers of her maid Miss Thompson, who was morbidly envious and fearfully spiteful against Aileen, whom she had at first dreamed as a rival in the good graces of her mistress.

Thompson had heard something about Lord Athlone trying to shut Aileen up in his rooms, and the countess sending Miss Godfrey home with her, but all the castle servants were cautious itself, and it was only from words dropped here and there that she knew anything at all, and what she knew she knew imperfectly. But the moment that the demon of jealousy entered the soul of Lady Emily, Thompson knew it, and from that day forth she proceeded to trade upon it.

Aileen has bidden adieu to her native mountain land, and the wide sea rolls between her and old Ireland. Everything is new and strange to her in this great Babylon of which she has heard so much.

London is not at all like what she had supposed it would be. It is very seldom that a place is at all like what our fancy has painted it. She had, she told herself, imagined crowds and gloom, perpetual fogs, narrow streets in which continually marched regiments of those soldiers who are supposed to keep Aileen's very rebellious island home in check.

Also she had figured to herself carriages all emblazoned with gold, and drawn by the most exquisite cream-coloured horses. She had fancied that the princes and the princesses of the blood royal drove about seated in these same gold emblazoned chariots; in fact she had read in her little history of the London of the middle ages, and she had fancied that it existed now.

It was bright, cold, keen weather in March; the sun shone and the wind blew and the dust flew before the wind. Aileen sat in her own room in the town mansion of the Earl of Clondell. It was a magnificent house, with its front in Belgrave Square. One side overlooked a thoroughfare that was not so elegant; on this side of the huge dwelling were the servants' rooms.

Aileen had had a long task of needlework set her by Miss Thompson; she seldom now saw Lady Athlone. A round of gaiety had begun already that monopolised, so it seemed, every hour of Lord Athlone and his bride from their eleven o'clock breakfast until they returned very early in the morning to their elegant home.

And all Lady Athlone's enthusiasm about Aileen was gone. She never spoke of the "Galway floweret" to her fine friends. The girl led a strange, sad, secluded life, continually sewing at the command of Thompson, taking her meals with that personage and a solemn butler, and only taking Lady Athlone's pet white dog out for an airing in the Park when the mornings were fine.

It seemed to her now like a dream that the time had been when Lady Athlone, then Lady Emily Fairleigh, had called her pet names and told her her secrets and banished Thompson from the room.

"She never speaks to me now," sighed poor Aileen. "I begin to think that London is very dull."

It was a fine morning. Aileen put down her work and looked out of the window. And then she saw somebody standing on the opposite side of the way and waving his hand to her. Yes, it was so without any doubt—it was Lord Athlone, who was making signs to his wife's maid. Covered with shame and confusion, Aileen arose from her seat near the window and hid herself in a distant corner of the room.

"I was foolish to come here," she said, "for Lord Athlone, who never gives me a word or a look, is still, I am convinced, my enemy. He must wish to hold me up to derision and scorn."

At this point in her self communings the door of her room opened and there entered Miss Thompson. "We have never given an exact sketch of this personage."

She was a very large, tall, bony woman, with a sallow swartheness of colouring, heavy black meeting brows, restless black eyes, and thick, coarse black hair. Her voice was deep and masculine. She had a bitter temper and a shrewish tongue. She had never been more than decently civil to Aileen, of whose influence with Lady Athlone she was mortally jealous. Miss Thompson was about forty years old; she wore a fashionable cap and a long trailing skirt. Her black eyes flashed angry fire upon Aileen.

"I was in the next room, which looks into the same street as this window does," she cried, in a high-pitched, piercing voice, "and I saw my Lord Athlone waving his hand—yes, and kissing his hand to somebody in one of these windows. Now will you have the face to tell me it was not to you?"

"I think—yes, I believe it was, Miss Thompson," Aileen began.

"But that virtuous and highly indignant lady interrupted her.

"You know it was, your deceitful hussy!" she said, with flaming eyes. "I heard enough about your goings on when I was in your barbarous, hateful country. All of you Irish girls pretend to be so much better than us English, and you are a hundred—million times worse. If I had my way now I would turn you out of the house at once, bag and baggage."

Aileen stood up pale with wrath.

"If I am to be judged because Lord Athlone has misbehaved himself, I will appeal somewhere else for justice. Let me see my lady and tell her all."

"Indeed, you will do nothing of the kind," responded Miss Thompson. "My lady is now out, and even if she were in the house I should not allow her to be worried by such disgraceful stuff. No, my fine lady, with your airs and graces setting up to be somebody above the clouds, I will watch you."

"I hope you will," responded Aileen. "All I wish for is to be watched, and then when you can discover any flaw in my conduct—mind, Miss Thompson, in mine, not in Lord Athlone's; I am not at all responsible for his—turn me adrift that same moment without a character and without a shilling."

They were wild, foolish and impetuous words that Aileen spoke out of her pure warm heart. Miss Thompson then burst into a derisive, satanic laugh, and she said:

"Hoighty, toighty! your temper is hot, mademoiselle, but depend upon it I will take you at your word. I will watch you, and the first time I discover anything wrong, out you go bag and baggage, just as you yourself have said, without a shilling and without a character."

And then this amiable specimen of woman-kind left the room and closed the door with a loud bang. Left alone reaction set in with poor Aileen, and she began to weep as if her heart would break.

"In all this world," she said, "there is not a more desolate, unhappy creature than myself. The very friends of my childhood have deserted me. Enemies crowd about me everywhere; I am utterly forlorn. Now yonder cruel woman hates me. I know not where to turn for a friend."

She wept long and bitterly, so that she was afraid to take up her work again lest her tears should spoil it. All at once came a tapping on the door of the room.

"Come in," cried Aileen.

And there entered a little pageboy with a note.

"It is from her ladyship," said the lad; "she sent me with it, and said I was to deliver it to you yourself."

Aileen broke the seal and read as follows:

"DEAR AILEEN,

"I am at Mr. Hongercourt's studio; you have heard of that great painter. I have spoken to him of you; he wishes you to be a model in a group he is painting with me. Come at once. Put on that cream-coloured silk alpaca trimmed with scarlet knots that I gave you to wear at Athlone Castle the day I was married. Come at once, but don't say a word to Thompson; she is so envious of my taking notice of you. The cab at the door is waiting for you. You may say that I have sent for you, but don't tell her one word about Mr. Hongercourt's studio. Make as much haste as you possibly can.

EMILY ATHLONE."

In a moment poor Aileen felt cheered and full of hope. Lady Athlone, then, was not her enemy after all.

"I will make great haste," she said to the pretty, pert-looking page.

The boy withdrew. Aileen changed her dress, put on her hat and jacket, and went down the stairs. On the first landing she met Miss Thompson.

"Good gracious! where are you going?" she said, scornfully, "in that light dress? It's not

respectable to wear a conspicuous dress like that in the streets."

"I am going to Lady Athlone; she has sent a cab for me," responded Aileen, briefly.

Miss Thompson looked at her with the keenest, cruellest suspicion in her eyes. Then she rushed down the wide, splendid staircase after her. In the hall she saw the little page in his green livery, the boy who had brought the note to Aileen.

"Who are you?" said Miss Thompson to the lad; "and who sent you here?"

"I have brought Miss Aileen Moore a note from Lady Athlone."

"And where then is her ladyship?" asked Miss Thompson.

"At Mr. Hongercourt's studio in Grafton Street, New Bond Street," the lad answered, glibly.

"Then are you that artist's page?"

"Yes, madame," the page replied.

"Lady Athlone sent you you say," questioned Miss Thompson.

"Lady Athlone sent me, madame," replied the youth, with a smile half daring, half courteous.

As for Aileen, she was in a hurry to get away and find herself once more tête-à-tête with Lady Athlone, the brilliant beauty whose former kindness she had never forgotten. She hurried on and entered the cab; the boy followed her, and soon the vehicle was rolling off in a direction which would have astonished the Galway lass had she understood London geography.

However, she did not at all understand London geography, consequently she sat contentedly watching the panorama of life as it passed before the cab windows, and she rather enjoyed this change from the monotony of her own room, the constant tasks set her by Miss Thompson, and the presence of that most uncompromising personage.

Presently the cab left the region of the shops. It was now in a smooth, level road; on either side stood handsome villas surrounded with walls; before the hall doors stretched grass plats, verdant even thus early in the spring, and the flowering buds of the almond and the American currant made the gardens bright in the March sunshine.

"What luxury; what wealth abounds in this great city," mused Aileen. "How different is the condition of the people I have left behind in my own poor country."

All at once the cab stopped before a high wall which surrounded a house, the chimneys alone of which could be seen from the high road.

"This is Mr. Hongercourt's," said the page in green, as he leaped out and rang a bell in the wall.

And Aileen had not the shadow of a suspicion. She saw the door in the wall open and a tall footman in the same green livery as the page appeared. She descended, and she saw the boy pay the cabman, who touched his hat and drove away, and then Aileen followed the page, and she found herself in a spacious garden with a wide lawn, on which grew many fine trees and shrubs.

There were flower-beds and a marble fountain. As for the house, it was white, with a verandah and French windows of plate glass, through which glowed curtains of rose-coloured satin.

On went Aileen fearlessly. She heard the footman lock the door in the wall without a suspicion or a fear, only there was an air of extreme stillness about the house that somehow gave her a strange sensation of sudden depression.

The boy ran on first into the house, for the door stood open, and Aileen following found herself in a hall paved with pure white marble. In the centre was a fountain, round which bloomed various tropical flowers whose glorious hues made a little summer in the apartment. The place was warmed by artificial means. Against the walls, which were panelled in light maple, hung some exquisite landscapes and sea pieces.

There were couches and chairs of dark crimson

velvet, which contrasted well with the marble whiteness of the floor and the fountain. Some exquisite foreign birds hung here and there in gilded cages. The whole place was pervaded by faint, delicate subtle perfume, the effect of which was invigorating and at the same time soothing. A white marble staircase, with a gilded balustrade wound up to the higher storeys. The young page in green led the way.

"My Lady Athlone is upstairs," he said.

And Aileen followed him. As she was mounting the stairs she heard the tall footman locking the front door, and yet she had no thought whatever of fear or danger. The landing was carpeted with crimson velvet pile. Exquisite marble statues gleamed here and there in the recesses.

There were flowers everywhere—flowers in huge china vases. The page opened a door and Aileen entered a room furnished after the style of the last century, with a picturesque yet lordly simplicity, if one may be allowed the paradox.

The floor of polished dark oak was bare, save in the centre, where was spread an almost priceless Persian carpet of resplendent dyes. The chairs, couches and cabinets were all of antique shapes, with much carving; they were of oak.

The upholstery was in pale canary-coloured satin; the curtains at the window seemed to Aileen as though woven in some material like molten gold. The walls were painted in panels, and represented arcadian scenes with shepherds and shepherdesses à la Watteau.

While Aileen looked round in admiration at this gorgeous room she heard the key turn in the lock; the page had locked her in. She was then a prisoner, and had fallen into a trap. Her first sensation was not fear, but anger. She was rushing towards the window, for instinct whispered to her that that would be the best way to give an alarm, when a pictured panel slid aside, and there stood before her no less a personage than Richard Lord Athlone.

His lordship was pale from suppressed excitement and anxiety respecting the success of his scheme, but he smiled and bowed and pointed to one of the canary satin chairs.

"Welcome to Emerald Villa," he said. "I have given it that name in honour of the green isle where you were born. This house is yours, sweet Aileen, and all it contains for as long as you like."

"Sir—my Lord Athlone, let me out at once!"

"By no means, fairest of servant maids," he answered, insolently. "You will not escape now as you did once before at that time my beautiful brother Ted came and took you away. He was your sweetheart then, but now he is dead, or gone to sea for aught I know. He knows nothing of my bijou villa, and if he did he could not get in, so you may make yourself happy, my dear child. You will have to spend at least six months in this retreat. Is it to your taste?"

"I hate it!" said Aileen, with flashing eyes. "I will tear down those fine hangings and toss those chairs into the fire if you don't let me out, Lord Athlone!"

(To be Continued.)

## SCIENCE.

### ANTIQUITY OF THE SPOON.

THE use of our common table utensil, the spoon, is widespread, and its invention, as it appears, dates from remote antiquity. The form which we use at the present day—a small oval bowl provided with a shank and flattened handle—is not that which has been universally adopted. If we examine into the manners and customs of some of the people less civilised than we—the Kabyles, for example—we shall find that they use a round wooden spoon. We might be led,

from the latter fact, to infer that the primitive of this utensil was round, and that the oval shape was a comparatively modern invention. But such is not the case, for M. Chantre, in making some excavations on the borders of Lake Paladru, the waters of which had been partially drawn off, found, in good state of preservation, wooden spoons which in shape were nearly like those in use at the present day, the only difference being in the form of the handle, which were no wider than the shank. The lacustrine station where these were found dates back to the ninth century and we therefore have evidence that oval spoons were already in use during the Carlovingian epoch. The Neolithic peoples used oval spoons made of baked clay; several fragments of such have been found in the Seine, and M. Perrault has also discovered a number in a Neolithic deposit in Burgundy. This gentleman found, in addition, a pot ladle. "The tablespoons," he says, "are elongated and exactly resemble the wooden spoons in use in our kitchens. Their bowls vary from 3 to 14 mm. in depth." The portions of handles which he collected were too fragmentary to allow it to be determined whether or not they terminated in a flattened handle like the modern forms.

It might be pertinent to inquire to what possible use a spoon could have been put in the Reineer Age, when raw meat was eaten, and when skin bottles were the only water vessels. Yet a genuine spoon made of reindeer's horn has been discovered in the Grotto of Gourdan. It is oval, very long, and quite shallow. Its handle is very elegant, being covered with engraved figures. Unfortunately it is broken so that it is impossible to say whether the handle was flattened. The slight depth of the spoon should not surprise us, for the men who made it knew neither soups nor sauces, and they could only have used it for the purpose of extracting the marrow from the long bones of large animals, or for eating the brains of the latter, and for such uses depth of bowl was of small consequence. M. Piette has likewise found other well characterised spoons in deposits of the Reindeer Age. One of these, more delicate, narrower, deeper, and less elegant than the one just mentioned, was found in one of the lowermost strata.

At a still greater depth in the same deposit he came across a thick rudely made spoon, which appeared never to have had any handle. It was made of rough dressed bone, with polished edges, and its shape was oval. Before the invention of such an implement as a spoon, man of the Reindeer Age employed the spatula; and this is found at all depths in the Gourdan and Lortet deposits. M. Garrigan discovered in the Grotto of Alliat a fragment of reindeer's horn hollowed out in its old length, and apparently designed for holding liquids; and similar utensils were found by M. Piette at Gourdan. These, however, were probably only temporarily used as spoons, the only genuine spoons which have been discovered being those described above, and which served as models for Neolithic man who afterwards appeared on the scene.

### NURSERY MILK.

WHETHER a woman's milk be used for nurselings, or the milk of one of the inferior animals, accidents to the milk will happen. The emotions affect all the secretions; thus grief will check the secretion (pigment), which gives the hair of the head its colour, and bring on white hair. It will stop the secretion of milk also, or turn its nutritive properties to a substance little better than poison; so that, if a woman be the impartor of the milk, can we shield her at all times from depressing emotion? Or, in the case of the cow, mare, ass, can we rely on mental rest and that undisturbed quiet so essential to the production of good reliable milk? Take the happiest cases of entire milk production, where we have a fine healthy mother or wet-nurse, is there a freedom from anxiety at all times? How about the husband on 'Change, in the mart? or the child that has had to be put to the care of a stranger,



or that is perhaps dead, and how is its father getting on? Has he found remunerative employment?

Accidents in over-eating, eating unsuitable things, eating out of season, and so forth, all tend to derange the digestion and the secretions. Sour feeding-bottles, sour milk-cans, the addition of contaminated water—not unfrequently from the pump or well in the vicinity of the cow-byre and midden, whose liquids percolate and find their way to the water—are amongst the few only of the accidents. With regard to the adulterations of milk, water may be allowed to be the least objectionable. We forbear even the mention of the various articles which are said to be used to give watered milk consistency and colour. As we have shown, it is impossible, even with the best supervision, to provide milk for the nursing of good quality at all times from either mother or wet-nurse, and the further we go for the milk—supplied in its entire state—the more are the chances of contamination.

Now, with regard to the relative qualities of various fresh milks, it is a popular belief that the milk of asses and mares is the richest of all. This is not the case; they are the least rich of all milks used in the nursery and sick-room in butter and flesh-forming principles, but the richest in lactine (sugar of milk) and the soluble salts; hence their greater sweetness and the greater ease with which they may be digested. In the case of weakly infants and persons exhausted by illness, where all the powers (the digestive powers among them) are at their weakest, asses' milk may always be relied upon on account of the ease with which it may be digested and assimilated. On the other hand, the milk of the goat, but, more especially, that of the sheep, contains most flesh-formers and butter, and is therefore much more difficult to digest.

As flesh-formers the various milks stand in the following relations to one another: beginning at the greatest flesh-formers and descending, they stand thus:—The sheep, cow, and goat (which may be bracketed as equal), woman's milk, then that of the ass, and lastly the mare. As yielders of butter they are—taken in the same order for quality—first the sheep, the goat, the cow, the woman, the ass, and the mare. With regard to sweetness, the mare's is by far the sweetest; then come the ass, goat, cow, sheep, woman. Lastly, with regard to the water of milk, this varies in the best milk very little. In a hundred parts of milk water varies from eighty-two parts in the milk of the sheep to ninety parts in the milk of the ass. From the above it will be learned how to treat milk for nursery purposes, always recollecting, of course, that the younger the nursing the weaker are its digestive powers, and, therefore, the less must be the fatty matter (butter) which is put into the stomach at a time. As, however, a sufficient quantity must at all times be a consideration, it follows that dilution with good wholesome water is a matter of the greatest moment.

We repeat, there is no part in nursery cookery which calls for half so much care and management as the watering of the milk in the case of infants brought up by the bottle. If milk, rich in butter and flesh-formers, be given undiluted to a very young infant at bedtime, its case will be as bad as the case of its nurse who takes a supper consisting of half a pound of cold salmon, four hard-boiled eggs, half a pound of cold plum-pudding, and who washed down the lot with a pot of stout. There will be as much rest for the one as for the other. On the other hand, milk may be over-watered for infants, and this is a very common error, though a safer one for the time, and it has the further redeeming quality that even the most careless only be-water the milk too much a time now and then.

In a recent lecture given by young Mr. Darwin, he said no explanation had yet been given which would account for the plant growing upwards and the root downwards. A cordial vote of thanks was passed to the lecturer.

## LEARNING TO WRITE.

We believe that there is no single system of *mécanique* for writing, and that a child belonging to the educated classes would be taught much better and more easily if, after being once enabled to make and recognise written letters, it were let alone, and praised or chidden not for its method, but for the result. Let the boy hold his pen as he likes, and make his strokes as he likes, and write at the pace he likes—hurrying, of course, being discouraged—but insist strenuously and persistently that his copy shall be legible, shall be clean, and shall approach the good copy set before him, namely, a well-written letter, not a rubbishy text on a single line, written as nobody but a writing-master ever did or will write to the world's end. He will make a muddle at first, but he will soon make a passable imitation of his copy, and ultimately develop a characteristic and strong hand, which may be bad or good, but will not be either meaningless, undecided, or illegible.

This hand will alter, of course, very greatly as he grows older. It may alter at eleven, because it is at that age that the range of the eyes is fixed, and short-sight betrays itself; and it will alter at seventeen, because then the system of taking notes at lecture, which ruins most hands, will have cramped and temporarily spoiled the writing, but the character will form itself again, and never be deficient in clearness or decision. The idea that it is to be clear will have stamped itself, and confidence will not have been destroyed by worrying little rules about attitude, and angle, and slope which the very irritation of the pupils ought to convince the teachers are, from some personal peculiarity, inapplicable. The lad will write, as he does anything else that he cares to do, as well as he can, and with a certain efficiency and speed. Almost every letter he gets will give him some assistance, and the master's remonstrance on his illegibility will be attended to, like any other caution given in the curriculum. As it is, he simply thinks that he does not write well, instead of thinking that not to write well is to fall short in a very useful accomplishment and to be *pro tanto* a failure.

We are not quite sure that another process ought not to be gone through before writing is taught at all. Suppose our boys and girls were taught to read manuscript a little? They are taught to read print, but manuscript is not print, or very like it, and they are left to pick up the power of reading that the best way they can; they never devote half-an-hour a day for six months to manuscript reading. If they did, it would be easier to them all their lives, and they would learn to believe in legibility as the greatest, or, at any rate, the most useful, quality that writing can display—an immense improvement, if our experience can be trusted, in the usual youthful ideal on the subject.

The business of life, no doubt, soon teaches children to read manuscript; but many of them never read it easily, and retain through life an unconquerable aversion to the work because of the fatigue and vexation which it causes them. We have known men so conscious of this defect that they always have important letters read aloud to them, and others who would refuse any work, however anxious on other grounds to accept it, if it involved the frequent perusals of long manuscripts in different handwritings. No doubt the tendency to a broad and coarse, but beautifully legible, handwriting, which has conquered the upper class and is slowly filtering downwards, is diminishing this reluctance, but it would be more rapidly removed if a little trouble were taken to read handwriting. They hardly see any till they begin to receive correspondence, and are never compelled to read any, and consequently learn to write what they cannot read, without intelligence and without pleasure.

It is believed that Cetewayo will shortly visit England.

## LOST THROUGH GOLD;

OR,

## A BEAUTIFUL SINNER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Frank Bertram's Wife," "Strong Temptation," &c., &c.

### CHAPTER XXIII.

#### A SABBATH DAY.

"Tis strange yet true, for truth is always strange.

A STRANGE gloom seemed to hang over The Grange on the Sunday morning which followed the discovery of Alice Duncan and Alice Tracy being one and the same person. Breakfast was ordered at half-past nine, and when Mr. Hardy came downstairs he found his hostess sitting in a low chair by the fire, a shadow on her face, and her clear eyes clouded with anxiety.

"You look evidently ill," began Duke, who, as a relation, had a right to speak his mind pretty freely to the young widow. "I daresay you have been worrying yourself all night about this business."

She smiled sadly.

"I can't help it. All night long I have been dreaming of her being taken. Somehow I have a presentiment we shall not be able to hide. She is so very young. Do you think they would kill her?"

"I fear it would be a fearful case of evidence against her. Of course, there is no moral proof; but if you are going to worry yourself into an illness, I shall be relieved when she is gone."

"Oh, I shall not be ill. I am very well."

"I never saw you look worse."

"Daylight does not suit me. I never feel fit for anything till about twelve o'clock. You generally come by candlelight, you know, and then I am at my best."

A kind of choking sensation came to Duke Hardy as he turned away and busied himself in cutting cold turkey. Of course, it was very wicked of Dorothea to have entrapped Raymond into marrying her. Of course, her affairs were a great deal of trouble, and Duke and she detested one another; but, for all that, he did not like the idea her words conjured up. He did not like to fancy The Grange without the mistress. She certainly ought to see a doctor; she looked very ill. He would speak to Miss Tracy, she might induce her to hear reason.

It was a relief to the silent pair when Alice joined them, although the danger which hung over the household concerned only her. Her face was clearer than either of the other two. She looked anxiously from one to the other as she took her seat, and hoped they had not been quarrelling very much. She loved Dora; she was inclined to like Duke; only could they not bury their animosity and be friends.

"Are we going to church?" she asked, brightly.

"Yes," replied Dorothea.

"No," answered Duke.

"Conflicting statements. Pray who am I to believe?"

"I thought you liked a country church, Mr. Hardy."

"I am quite willing to go. I merely recommend you to stay at home."

"And why, pray?"

"It is a great deal too cold for you."

"If I stayed away from church all the cold Sundays, my devotions would be limited."

Alice wore a deep veil which, from forgetfulness or design, she did not raise during the whole of the service. The Cardens were at church in a strong body, only Arty being left behind. James occupied the end seat, and his eyes wandered very often to The Grange pew. Duke could hardly tell whether he was staring at Alice or Mrs. Hardy. He thought the latter.

"He's not worth the dust under her feet," so-

liloquised the barrister, "and would probably get tired of her in a month; but I daresay she'll marry him. Women like that sort of man; more's the pity."

The family from the Ivy House joined The Grange party as they came out of church. The little old ladies in their snuff-coloured gowns had a faint hope of being asked to luncheon, but it was not gratified. Dora hated Sunday visiting. She walked on with Mr. Carden to her own gate. His elder sisters had appropriated Alice, and poor Duke had been captured by Ela.

"I was so sorry for you," said Dorothea, when they were safely gathered around the fire in the drawing-room. "I did think of offering a change, and I honestly believe Ela's the best of the two."

"How they stuck to us!"

"Don't abuse them, Mr. Hardy. They have a great esteem for you."

"Have they?"

"Yes. Last time you were down here on a Sunday Jimmie informed me in confidence that if Ela had been a marrying girl you were just the man they would have chosen for her!"

Duke shrugged his shoulders.

"I'm much obliged to them. Fancy calling her a girl, why she must be double your age."

"Barely. I explained to them you were immensely rich, and entertained a great fear of being married for your money."

"You should be careful what you say, Mrs. Hardy. Variations from the truth are always dangerous."

"I know they are," replied the little widow, sorrowfully, "and so when Mr. Carden asked me if I should be at home this afternoon, I was obliged to say yes, though I'd have given anything in the world to say no."

Duke poked the fire viciously, just as though he had known Dorothea seven years. They dined early at The Grange on Sunday. The meal passed off very pleasantly, and then they returned to the drawing-room. Duke had never been more agreeable. He seemed to know by instinct the weight that lay at his companions' hearts, and he worked so hard to amuse them that they had both laughed as merrily as if they had never heard of the Aston mystery before the page appeared.

"Mr. Carden, ma'am?"

"Have you shown him into the study?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"I wouldn't inflict him on you," she said, gaily, when the servant had disappeared. "Confess I'm very good to endure him all by myself. I shan't be long," and she was gone.

"Does that man come often?" asked Duke Hardy of Alice, saying "that man" very much in the tone in which he would have spoken of some repulsive animal.

"He has only been once since I came."

"And what do you think of him?"

"I don't like him."

"I wish Mrs. Hardy shared your dislike."

"Dora! Why, she does. She detests him."

"Then she should keep him at a distance. Anyone can see he doesn't detest her."

Dorothea found her visitor standing in the centre of the hearth, his back to the fire and his hands in his pockets. He extended one hastily as she entered. She just touched it, and then sat down.

"I must apologise for receiving you here; but you asked for a private interview, and my friends are in the drawing-room."

"Yes, I wished to see you alone."

Dead silence. Dorothea grew nervous, and poked the fire viciously.

"I daresay you can guess what has brought me," began the solicitor, clearing his throat carefully.

"I haven't the slightest idea," with embarrassing frankness.

"I should have thought my object must have been very apparent."

"I daresay it's my fault," encouragingly. "I am very dense sometimes; people often tell me so."

"Very rude of them."

"Friends are privileged; but, Mr. Carden, as I am not clever enough to guess, won't you tell me what procured me this pleasure? There is something mysterious about it. You come on a Sunday afternoon—an hour usually saved to naps—and you stipulate beforehand that I am to be alone. My curiosity is fairly aroused."

"The answer is very simple. I came here this afternoon to ask you to be my wife."

Dead silence. It would be untrue to say she had never feared this, but she had not expected the proposal. Now, for some minutes, she could not frame a reply.

"I am not a young man," went on Mr. Carden, slowly, "but I can offer you my whole heart. I have never loved before. I never thought of marrying till I saw you."

"Dear me! I wish you had never seen me," said Dora, to herself.

"I am your equal in worldly possessions, and the few years between us present no real obstacle. Dorothea, will you let me hope that some day you will be my wife?"

"I cannot," she answered, firmly. "I have no thought of marrying again."

"Widows always say that," with an odious smile.

"Indeed! How many have made the observation to you?" scornfully.

"Dorothea," began the solicitor, gravely.

"Mrs. Hardy, if you please."

"Mrs. Hardy, be it, then; I cannot take your decision as final. It is no light wish that I have to marry you. It is the one desire of my life, and I never yet failed in anything I undertook."

"You will fail in this. Why do you speak to me like this? Do you think I am to be threatened into marrying a man I hate?"

"Strong words, but you will retract them."

"Never!"

"Oh, yes, when you know the man you hate has been a little behind the scenes."

She sat looking on the ground. She would not answer him. For a moment she wished Duke Hardy were her brother, that she could appeal to him against the man before her.

"I know one or two of your little secrets."

"You are welcome to them."

"And if you scorn me I may use them."

"I am no coward, Mr. Carden."

"I know that," said the man, passionately.

"If you were a coward I shouldn't love you as I do. From the moment I saw you I made up my mind I would move heaven and earth to win you."

"Mr. Carden," said Dorothea, in a gentler tone, "this interview is causing us unnecessary pain. Had we not better end it?"

"Not yet. If you are in a hurry to return to Miss Tracy's society I will not detain you long."

"Miss Tracy!" gasped Dorothea. "Then you know?"

"I know you are harbouring one who ought to stand her trial for murder. Mrs. Hardy, I hear you love this girl as though she were your sister."

"I believe I do."

"Listen to me. Give me but a shadow of hope and I will prove her innocence. I have solved many mysteries in my time; I daresay I could solve this."

She shook her head sadly.

"A woman's love is not to be bought by bribes."

"Then to-morrow your darling will be in the hands of the police. I shall go straight from you to Scotland Yard."

Dorothea threw herself at his feet.

"Have mercy! have pity! If you knew how she has suffered, how young and sorrowful she is, you could not be so cruel."

"It is you who are cruel. You who deliver her over to the hands of justice. A word from you would bind my tongue."

"A word from me."

"Promise me to be my wife, and I swear to you Alice Tracy shall go free."

"The price is too great. I cannot marry a man for whom I have no love."

"You did it once."

A look of pain crossed her face.

"I did not. I loved my husband as the dearest friend I had in the world, though I did not love him as he loved me."

"Give me the same measure."

"I cannot."

"Ah, it was a great rise for the telegraph clerk to be a lady of fortune. Mrs. Hardy of The Grange is rich enough to consult her heart."

"You must have taken some trouble to find out my past?"

"I make it my business. Think of the change it will make in your position when the little world of Keston knows who and what you are."

"I am indifferent to the opinion of Keston."

"And you are indifferent to Miss Tracy's fate. As you know there is as strong a case of circumstantial evidence against her as was ever forged. If she is condemned, if they take her life, in Heaven's sight you will have killed her."

"You torture me. Have pity!"

"I will have none, unless you have pity on me."

"Will you wait?"

"Wait until you have sent her away."

"To-day is Sunday," said Dora, with feverish eagerness. "We could not take a long journey on Sunday, besides all the London termini are being watched. It would be quite late before you got to Scotland Yard to-day. Give me a little grace. Let me think it over. You shall have my answer tonight. If you choose you can go up by the first train to-morrow morning."

He hesitated.

"Dorothea, is there any chance?"

There was no mistaking one thing; he loved her. A mad, jealous, unreasoning love, perhaps; but still love.

"I shall never love you. I know that quite well."

"But if you married me I would make you so happy. Love must come in time."

"I can say nothing now. If you insist on a reply it must be the one I gave you first. If you will wait I will write to-night."

"And you will think over all I have said?"

"I will not forget anything."

He rose. For one moment he looked at her in silence.

"What spell have you enchain'd me with, I wonder? In all my life I have scoffed at love, and now I know there is nothing in the whole world I would not do for the sake of winning you at last."

"I have used no spell," she said, wearily. "I have never tried to win your love or any other man's. I have never loved in all my life. I think sometimes I never shall."

James Carden shook his head.

"You will love once. All women of your type do. Good-bye. You will write?"

"I will write. Good-bye."

Their hands met; she tried hard not to shudder. As she heard the hall door close after him, she went wearily back to the drawing-room. Duke Hardy sat there alone with a scowl on his face.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### WAR TO THE KNIFE.

War, war is still the cry. War to the knife.  
War to the knife.

The shadow on Marmaduke's face did not relax as Dorothea entered. She went straight up to the hearth and sat down in an easy chair opposite to him. For some time she did not speak, only pressed her hand to her aching head and tried to think of some plan for the escape of the girl who had suddenly become so dear to her.

She never for a moment thought of yielding to James Carden's suit. If she could but plan Alice's freedom she cared little for what her disappointed lover might say of her. As she had told Duke Hardy long ago, she was always a lady. If she had had to earn her bread after a humble fashion, she yet came of gentle blood, of an old family who prided themselves that



their sons were brave and their daughters true. Duke broke the silence, and tapping with his foot impatiently on the ground, he asked:

"What did that fellow want?"

"He knows everything," she said, sadly, and he is going to send the detectives here unless—"

She stopped abruptly, having got herself into an embarrassing dilemma.

"Unless what?" inquired Duke, coolly.

"Unless I marry him," returned Dora, without a blush or a tinge of nervousness, much as she would have mentioned any business arrangement. "He has given me until this evening to make up my mind."

"Very kind of him," ironically. "Shall I leave you? Such a weighty question must need careful consideration."

"You actually believe I could do that? How can you think so badly of me?"

"I don't. I follow your own statement that the decision was uncertain."

"I made him leave it like that so that I could get Alice safely away; and now I can't think of anything? I feel utterly at a loss."

"You have quite determined to risk Mr. Carden's displeasure?"

"Quite."

"He must be a contemptible cur to suggest such a bargain?"

"But abusing him won't help Alice."

"I wish she had stayed in Scotland," said Duke, testily. "You look worried to death."

"Do I?" with a faint smile. "My head aches with trying to think. We must go away; I am sure of that, but I can't grasp the details."

"You must not go to London," decided Duke, promptly. "Depend upon it, descriptions of Miss Tracy are in the hands of the police. The best thing to do would be to order the carriage and then drive to some obscure country station."

"But afterwards?"

"You can take the train to anywhere you like. You had better avoid large towns. I tell you frankly you are assuming a heavy burden."

"If a share of Alice's troubles is so heavy what must they be to bear alone?"

Mr. Hardy's answer was to rise and ring the bell.

"Your mistress will require the close carriage in an hour's time," he said, to the page. And send the housekeeper here at once."

When the woman came, all wonder and anxiety at the unwonted summons, he took all the trouble of explanations off Dorothea.

"Mr. Carden has brought your mistress some bad news. One of her friends is dangerously ill, and she will set off at once to see her. Mrs. Hardy may be away a day, or she may be detained weeks. I shall be backwards and forwards, but we shall look to you, Mrs. Hill, to keep everything at The Grange in its usual order."

Mrs. Hill agreed eagerly. She felt almost frightened at the strangeness of the news.

"Shall I help you pack, ma'am?" to Dorothea.

"You can come to me in ten minutes, Hill."

She rose when the housekeeper had gone, and laid one of her small hands on Duke's shoulder.

"Thank you very much," she said.

How she broke the news to Alice Dora never rightly knew, but the girl herself seemed far less anxious than her friend did for her, and in a few minutes they were packing. Only the fewest and simplest things did Dora select—one small bag between the two, and yet nothing that was necessary had been left out. As they packed Mrs. Hardy gave a few trifling directions to the housekeeper, ordered all letters to be forwarded to Mr. Hardy's office, and application to be made to him should money be wanted before they returned. Then she dismissed her helper.

"Alice," began Dorothea, when they were alone, "I want you to put on this."

This was one of the heavy, crape-trimmed dresses Mrs. Hardy had worn during the first

year of her widowhood. In figure the two girls were much alike. Alice was a trifle the taller, but Dora had a fancy for very long trailing garments, so that there was nothing impossible in Alice assuming her attire. A small bonnet, with the white crape border inside which bespeaks widowhood, and a long sealskin jacket, were next handed to Miss Tracy by her friend. She wonderingly obeyed.

"You had better have a veil. Take this. There."

She fastened a heavy crape veil over the bonnet, and then turned Alice round to judge of the disguise. She smiled, well pleased at her work. Her own toilet was soon effected. A short, black serge walking costume, a plain black cloth jacket, and straw hat—in a word, Alice's usual everyday dress—were quickly donned.

"I think I make a very good young lady!" said she, with a smile. "Mind you keep up the dignity of matronhood, Alice."

"But I don't understand."

"If it is true, dear," said Mrs. Hardy, tenderly, "that far and wide people are looking for you, we had better deceive them as much as possible. You are Mrs. Hardy, a young widow, and I am Miss Duncan, her companion. I don't answer to the description of you, and people won't look for you in that disguise."

The short winter's day was closing in when they went downstairs. The carriage was at the door, and Mr. Hardy stood in the hall, waiting to hand them to it. He jumped in afterwards.

"Surely you are not coming?" said Dora.

"Indeed I am, the first stage of the journey, at any rate."

"Where to, ma'am?" asked the footman, looking at Alice.

Both the ladies were silent, but Duke Hardy was equal to the emergency.

"Chislehurst station. There's no train from Bromley."

It was almost a silent drive. Alice leant back in a corner of the carriage, glad that her thick veil hid her face; but Dora looked out of the window with feverish eagerness. In every vehicle which passed them, in every footfall, she seemed to see the officers of justice come to carry off her friend.

"Do you know me?" she asked, at last, as they drove up to the station, raising her veil and looking at Duke. "I made Alice put on my things to look like me. I thought it would be better!"

"Of course I know you," returned the barrister. "I am up to all sorts of disguises. I have seen so many; and he might have added:

"I should know your face whatever you were dressed in."

The footman took their tickets for London, and retired in the firm belief that his mistress had started for the metropolis; but at New Cross Mr. Hardy signed to his companions to alight.

"Where are we to go next?" asked Dorothea, curiously.

"What do you say to Sandgate?"

"Nothing could be better. It will be as quiet as a convent."

There was an hour to wait before the train arrived, and then it went no nearer than Folkestone.

"We can easily get a carriage on," said Duke, cheerfully.

"We? Are you coming, too?"

"Unless you have any objection," with a return of their old warfare.

He secured a comfortable first-class carriage, and by lavish use of a silver key the guard promised their privacy should not be disturbed. The first use Dora made of this freedom was to pillow her head on her arm and forget her troubles in sleep. Duke watched her with a curious smile.

"Can you not follow her example," he said presently to Alice.

She shook her head.

"You would be all the better for the rest. You don't know what lies before you."

"I am thankful and glad Dora should have it."

"You must take great care of her," rejoined Mr. Hardy, with wonderful solicitude for a person who professed to hate him. "Don't let her exert herself, and if things don't go smoothly just telegraph for me. That's my address," giving her a card. "Of course, she'll tell you not to send for me, but you mustn't notice that."

"I am very sorry to have brought all this trouble on her."

"Well you can't help it now it's done," rather bluntly. "She's one of the last persons in the world to take care of herself, but she may turn out a good hand at taking care of other people."

"What shall we do when we get to Folkestone?"

"Put up at an hotel for the night, and look out for lodgings the next morning. Then I shall have to leave you."

"You are very kind to take so much trouble."

"Am I?" with a strange smile. "You see my cousin left his wife in my care, and though we don't agree on many subjects, I do the best I can for her."

"Good gracious! you don't mean you think she's ill?" looking at the fair, sleeping face keenly. "She always looks pale and thin. But I don't think she is as bad as your words imply."

"I don't mean that," hastily.

"I only thought she was so pretty she was sure to marry again, sooner or later."

"She'll marry a scamp who'll run through her fortune and leave her to starve," was the cheerful prophecy.

"What are you saying about starving?" asked Mrs. Hardy, waking suddenly in time to hear Duke's concluding words.

"Nothing," shortly. "Do you feel better for your nap?"

"I feel fit for anything. When shall we be at Folkestone?"

"Pretty soon now. Somewhere about ten."

"If it was not for its cause, I think I should enjoy this very much," declared Dorothea, rubbing her eyes. "It is the strangest Sunday I ever spent in my whole life."

Duke collected the luggage only just in time, for they were steaming into the station. In another quarter of an hour the three were gathered round a cosy supper-table, in one of the nicest sitting-rooms of the H—Hotel. It was very strange to see Alice in the close cape and soft trailing dress he had been so used to associate with Dora. It was stranger still to see her installed opposite himself and Dorothea in a plain untrimmed, serge short enough to show off her small feet, sitting alone at the side of the table and called "miss" by the waiter; but yet Duke had rarely had a pleasanter meal. When it was over the little party separated.

"Take care of yourselves," was Duke's parting charge. "Remember, Mrs. Hardy, you will need plenty of strength before we see the end of this, so don't run any unnecessary risks now."

Which Mrs. Hardy he spoke it to would have been hard to say. His words applied equally to the two, and the false one thanked him warmly. The other barely touched his hand with her fingers, and never gave him even a parting look as she left the parlour. When they reached their own room Dora locked the door, and then turned to her friend.

"On the whole, what do you think of Duke Hardy?"

"I like him very much."

Dorothea opened her eyes.

"Take care, Alice. Remember the pledge I have given in your behalf that you won't attack his heart or fortune."

"I never want to attack them, Dora."

She spoke so sadly, that the widow asked tenderly:

"Did you ever want a heart, Alice. Is there anyone in Scotland you are thinking of?"

Alice blushed.

"That is answer enough. I suppose you love him very much?"



[RELENTLESS.]

"More than my life," said Alice, earnestly. Dorothea sighed.

"I wonder if I shall ever love anyone like that? I used to think one could get through the world without love; but somehow, dear, I fancy it would be a very desolate, incomplete life that held no love."

"Every woman loves once."

"Then I suppose my turn's to come; it certainly hasn't come yet."

In spite of the late journey; in spite of her fatigue, Dora went downstairs soon after eight the next morning. Early as it was, Duke Hardy had been before her. He was sitting by the fire wrapped in thought.

"What a shame to have disturbed you so early," as he shook hands with her.

"I am glad to get up always. I don't think I am a sleepy subject."

"You looked one in the train last night."

"Mr. Hardy?"

He noticed the seriousness of her tone and answered her as gravely.

"What is it?"

"When those men—you know whom I mean, the men Mr. Carden will send—find Alice is not at The Grange will they come on here?"

"If they find out we are here."

"But will they find out?"

"I expect the police will pay The Grange a visit to-day. The servants will be pretty thoroughly cross-questioned, and it will come out that you took tickets for town. Unless they are very astute they will fall into that trap and believe you in London."

Directly after breakfast they hired a carriage and drove over to Sandgate in search of apartments, which were plentiful enough at that season of the year. They took a very pretty drawing-room floor facing the sea. Alice was introduced as the lady who was to be Mrs. Day's tenant.

Dora was described as her friend who lived with her and saw to her comforts. Mrs. Day, who measured people by their attire, quite accepted this view of the case. The widow in

the rich silk and sealskin jacket was the one to whom she must look for payment; the young lady in the serge dress was only her companion. Duke Hardy explained the ladies were quite uncertain as to the length of their stay. He paid a fortnight's rent in advance, and left Mrs. Day with a very high opinion of him as the only gentleman who never tried to beat down her terms.

"I don't half like leaving you," said Duke, as the two girls stood on the platform to see him off, "but I have an immensity of business to attend to. Don't scruple to write for me if you want me."

"We shan't want you," was Dora's grateful reply.

And Duke went back to London with it ringing in his ears. Susan and Jemima Carden wondered very much what could be the matter with their brother James on the eventful Sunday that Dorothea left The Grange. He was out the best part of the afternoon, and when he returned he locked himself in his study.

"He's been to see Mrs. Hardy," said Ela, with the ready instinct of jealousy. "Sisters, that's where he has been."

"Well, it's the most amusing place in Keston," said Jemima, frankly.

"It doesn't seem to have raised James's spirits if it is," retorted Miss Susan.

He appeared at tea. The Cardens never attended church in the evening. When the meal was over, and every trace of it had disappeared, they gathered round the fire, Ela sitting on a footstool with her head on Jemima's lap, Arthur eating sweets and thereby reduced to a wonderfully meek frame of mind.

James Carden looked round at them and thought they had never looked so plain and uninteresting before. Then his thoughts wandered to the fair, graceful woman he had asked to share his home. If Dorothea accepted him, no effort of his should be spared to make her happy.

"Jemima," he said, abruptly, "I want to talk to you seriously."

Jemima rubbed her eyes and tried to look wide awake, in which she failed. Ela looked up with childish awe.

"Shall Arty and I go away, James, if you want to talk to sis?"

"No, stay where you are," he answered, almost roughly. "Jemima, has it ever occurred to you that this is a dull home for a man of my years and wealth?"

"No, never," confessed Jemima.

"It is not dull," snapped Susan. "We are never dull; the dear children—"

"Speak of things by their proper names," said James, irritably. "There have been no children here for twenty years. I suppose you mean Arthur and Ela."

"Yes," a little snubbed.

"Well, if this home answers your wishes it does not mine. I want younger faces and brighter society; in a word, I am going to be married, and I want you all to provide yourselves with another home before I bring my wife here."

"You want to turn us out of doors."

This from Susan indignantly.

"There is no question of turning out of doors. This house is mine, and I require it for my own use. You have each of you more than enough money to live comfortably elsewhere."

"We'll go to-morrow, sister," said Susan, firmly. "We won't be asked to go twice."

Poor Jemima answered nothing. She felt too overwhelmed at that moment. A servant entered with a note on a waiter. She handed it to Mr. Carden.

"From The Grange, please sir."

His impatience was such that there before them all he opened the dainty envelope. For some seconds he could not look at the paper it enclosed; he felt too anxious. Then he gave one glance at it and crushed it in his hand. Mrs. Hardy's answer to his suit was of Spartan brevity, and contained in one line, "War to the knife!"

(To be Continued.)





[OUT OF THE TOILS.]

## VIOLA HARCOURT; OR, PLAYING WITH HEARTS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

*"Evander," "Tempting Fortune," etc., etc.*

## CHAPTER XIV.

## THE MESSAGE.

Bright spark of hope  
Sneak your beams on me,  
And speed a happy message  
From those I long to see.

MR. BRADY was congratulating himself on the clever way in which he had led up to the subject he had in his mind, and he proceeded to the attack with renewed vigour.

"Perhaps, doctor, you are bashful," he exclaimed. "Most young men of good principles and exemplary lives are. If so you do not like to declare your love. This is all very well, yet, at the same time, it is bad to cherish a concealed passion. Better risk a declaration, and stand or fall by it."

Herbert Conyers was more puzzled than ever.

"Really, my dear sir," he said, "I feel grateful for the concern you take about me; but I am quite at a loss to understand you."

"Then I must be more explicit."

"If you please," Herbert replied, respectfully.

"It has been remarked that you have paid my daughter considerable attention. I am sure we are all deeply gratified by it. I have made a little fortune, and can give the girl twenty thousand on her marriage. The wife approves of you, and I believe Libby thinks as much of you as a modest girl ought to under the circum-

stances. I'm a bad hand at speech-making, but the thing lies in a nutshell. If you like the girl take her, and God bless you both!"

Herbert Conyers was astonished at this outspoken announcement, which he had not anticipated. Many a time he had confessed to himself that he liked Libby Brady; but did he love her? When the matter was put to him in this plain, straightforward manner, he had to admit that after Viola he did like her better than any girl he had ever met.

He remained silent for some minutes, and the more he thought the more the conviction gained upon him that he ought to close with Mr. Brady at once. Yet a still, small voice in his heart of hearts whispered that he should not decide off-hand, but ask permission to take a little time to decide, as it was necessary to consider.

"Dear Mr. Brady," he replied, "I feel very grateful for the honour you do me, and should esteem an alliance most highly. Your daughter is a charming girl, and anyone who gets her will be a lucky man indeed. Yet Miss Libby has given me no cause to think that my suit would be successful, and—"

"That's all right. I'll answer for that," interrupted the merchant. "I tell you she'll have you, and the match will please us. We've known your father for years, so he can't object. It is all in your own hands. Yes or no?"

"But really, my dear sir, I—"

"No buts. Either you take my daughter or leave the house. I can't have this flirting going on any longer, it's not fair to Libby. Playing with hearts, my dear boy, is a dangerous and at the same time a disgraceful game. If you do not love her enough to marry her, you have not done the right thing, for you have led her on to believe you do. Tell her to-morrow she is yours, or clear out and make room for another man."

This language on the part of Mr. Brady was unusually bold and decided, but it did him credit. He seemed as if he was on 'Change selling a cargo of wheat. It was like it or leave it. He would not abate one jot or tittle of the price he named.

Herbert Conyers was fairly caught in his own trap. While flirting with Libby he had only seriously intended to pass the time away to soothe his melancholy for the love of Viola. Now the meshes of the net were thrown so tightly around him, that he could not escape. The father's eloquence proved to him that he would be playing the part of a villain if he refused Libby, and his vanity was gratified at her predilection in his favour.

"I accept your offer, sir, in the same sincere spirit in which it is undoubtedly made," he said, "and I hope your daughter will never have cause to regret her choice."

"Not she. You're a fine young fellow. Give me your hand; I feel proud to shake it," cried Mr. Brady, who was delighted beyond measure. "Bravo! this makes me feel young again. We'll have a marriage in Merton within a month that shall astonish the natives. I never do things by halves. It shall all be to the Queen's taste, and shan't cost you a farthing; but let me ask one question finally. Is there any prior engagement? I don't want my girl to stand in the light of any woman's happiness."

"Oh, no, sir! I assure you that—that, in fact—that is, I am perfectly free," stammered Herbert.

"All well and good. We'll have a bottle of wine, and you must do the rest yourself to-morrow morning."

The next day Herbert Conyers was left alone with Libby Brady, who had evidently been prepared for what was coming by her mother. He told her briefly that he loved her, and had the consent of her parents to make the avowal to her, whereupon she placed her hand in his, and falling on his shoulder, like a foolishly happy little girl, began to cry. Of course he soothed her, kissed her tears away, begged her to fix the day, which she did at six weeks from that time, and then they talked about their future plans, where they would go for the honeymoon, and what a nice house they would have of their own in Merton.

Herbert was to get all the practice and be a great doctor, and Libby was to have dresses of such and such a colour, and a sealskin cloak and diamonds, with all sorts of other nice pretty things. She declared that she would not touch a penny of the money her father was going to give her, but that Bertie should have the entire control of it, and give her so much a week for housekeeping and so much for pin money.

"I thought at one time, Bertie, dear, you did not love me," she said, softly.

"Why, my darling?" he inquired.

"Because at times you were so distant and indifferent. When I spoke to you you did not answer me."

"I was thinking, my pet."

"Of what?"

He did not dare to reply for a moment, for if he spoke the truth and said he was thinking of Viola what would Libby think of him? so he had to invent a falsehood. As he did so a cold perspiration broke out all over him. His brow became damp and clammy, for the thought struck him that Viola might be alive, and that Sandford Newton might have been trifling with him after all. In that case—but the thought was madness. He dismissed it peremptorily, and answered her to the purpose with some hurried words about the pressure of business, difficult cases he had in hand, and nonsense of that kind.

"And will you love me always?" she asked.

"Always, dearest," he answered.

"Oh, I am so happy," she continued, "for I do love you, Bertie, my own, better than anyone in the wide, wide world."

She looked up in his eyes lovingly, and he had to kiss her again. As soon as he could he got away from her and strolled in the garden. There he wandered into the road, rambling by the river. On the bank was a duck struggling violently to get away from a weed, in which one of its legs seemed entangled.

As he got nearer he saw some paper tied by a ribbon to the hind leg. This it was which had caused the entanglement. As he approached the duck made another and more desperate effort. The ribbon parted and allowed it to fly away, but the paper remained. Obeying a natural impulse of curiosity, Bertie Conyers stooped down and picked it up. What could it be?

## CHAPTER XV.

### A CLEVER DETECTIVE.

All was confused and undefined.  
To her all farred and wandering mind:  
A chaos of wild hopes and fears,  
Now in laughter and now in tears.

It was with feelings of mingled fear, joy, and amazement that Herbert Conyers read the contents of the letter which had so curiously come into his possession, fear because of his recently made engagement with Miss Brady, joy at the knowledge that Viola was alive, and amazement at his singular discovery of her imprisonment.

Oh, how his heart beat wildly, how his brain whirled, as he stood by the side of the little gliding river, almost wishing that its pellucid depths would swallow him up and close over his head for ever. Why had he not waited? What demon had prompted him to act so rashly? A few hours would have made all the difference. He might have been free, whereas now he was a slave.

"Viola! Viola!" he cried, in his agony; "my life, my soul, I love thee! Oh, Heaven, what have I done?"

The tears coursed one another rapidly down his cheeks. How could he break off his engagement with Libby Brady? Poor Libby loved him. She would break her heart if he treated her badly. The world would call him a scoundrel, and perhaps her father would publicly horse-whip him.

In spite of what Sandford Newton had told him, he knew that he had only to see Viola, to throw himself at her feet, and beg for her love, and she could not refuse him. It would be im-

possible for her to forget the happy days of their courtship and all they had been to one other.

It was no time for hesitation. Viola must be found and rescued. He did not think it prudent to act alone, so he controlled his agitation by the exercise of an heroic effort, and determined to visit Dr. Newton at once to ask his advice in the emergency.

He did not wish Miss Brady to see how deeply exercised he was, so he avoided the house, taking a short cut to the station. A train soon conveyed him to London, and he hastened in a cab to the doctor's house. Sandford was at home, but his father was out. The young gentleman looked much embarrassed, but he received Herbert with apparent frankness, offering him a cigar and placing a chair at his disposal.

"Glad to see you," he exclaimed. "You look as much upset as I am; but I should think you ought to be a happy fellow. My father met old Brady this morning, and he said you were to marry his daughter in a week."

Herbert Conyers bit his lip with vexation. He would not have had Sandford Newton know this for anything. It tended to complicate matters.

"Not quite so soon as that," he replied.

"Well, you are engaged, so it's all the same. Libby is a nice girl. I met her at a ball last year, and the old man has got lots of money. You are a lucky fellow; but haven't you contrived to forget poor Viola rather quickly?"

Herbert coloured up to the eyes. There was an implied reproach in this speech which cut him to the heart.

"I'll tell you what has upset me," Sandford went on. "You remember the row I had with Tarlington? Well, the committee of the Duke's Club have considered the matter, and I'll be hanged if they haven't expelled me from the club, because they say my conduct was unbecomingly gentlemanly. I can't understand these fellows. Tarlington's influence, I suppose, is paramount with the members of the committee. I wish we could find Viola."

He paced the room in an impatient manner and grated his teeth viciously, while his hands clinched themselves savagely, as if indicating what he would do to his enemy, Lord Tarlington, if he could get him into his power.

"Your wish will soon be gratified," replied Herbert.

"How?" cried Sandford, in surprise.

"I have news of Viola, which I have come to communicate to your father."

"Indeed! By Jove, that is splendid! The governor will be here in a minute," he said, looking at his watch. "He has an appointment at two with Lady Clementina Sutton and Dubois, the detective. They are thinking of increasing the reward."

As he spoke the bell rang, and Dr. Newton entered. He was followed very shortly by Lady Clementina and the detective. Herbert Conyers showed them the letter which had so strangely come into his possession, and their delight knew no bounds. Herbert told them that the only courtesan he knew in Merton was La Dama Blanca, and offered to conduct Dubois to the old house.

"This is a wonderful dispensation of Providence," remarked the doctor; "let us congratulate ourselves on the discovery. Lady Clementina, you will soon have your pet with you again, and I trust you will take such care that her enemies will not triumph over her any more."

"She shall be carefully watched night and day," replied her ladyship.

Dubois had the management of the case in his hands, and he decided to go down to Merton at once, accompanied only by Herbert. This was a disappointment to Sandford, who wanted to be the first to speak to Viola, but he comforted himself with the reflection that Bertie was no longer a rival, as he was engaged to Libby Brady. The ground was now clear, and his chance of gaining the hand of the girl he loved was better than it had ever been.

Lady Clementina accepted an invitation to dine with the doctor that evening, and declared that she would have no peace of mind until Dubois returned. Going to the nearest livery

stable, the detective ordered a carriage with two swift horses, in which he started for Merton with Herbert, whom he questioned closely as they went along.

From the information he received he felt certain that the Countess di Cazenova was the same person who had been connected with Madame Menzies in Paris, and if so, he thought he should be able to connect Lord Tarlington with the abduction and imprisonment of Viola. He was in high glee at this, for he saw his way to making a large sum of money out of the case.

When they reached the old house they knocked at the door, and in the course of a few minutes a wicket was drawn back, through which Martha looked at the callers. She no sooner saw the young doctor than she shook her head, informing him that she had left word for him that his services would be no longer required, as her mistress was better, and refusing to hold any argument, she closed the wicket.

Dubois grinned and pointed to the wall, against which stood a small ladder belonging to the lamp-lighter of the village, who had left it there for his convenience. Herbert took the hint, and they quickly climbed up, dropping lightly on the other side.

Martha was seen entering the house. They were close at her heels, and before she could enter the drawing-room, Dubois pushed her on one side, threw open the door, and behind a young lady standing near an elderly one who was reclining on a sofa. One was Viola, the other the Countess di Cazenova. Both turned round at the sound of footsteps. The recognition between Herbert and Viola was mutual and instantaneous. With a loud cry she rushed forward and threw herself into his arms, saying:

"Herbert, my own—my loved one! At last you have come. Saved, saved!"

He supported her trembling form by putting his arm round her waist, and whispered encouragement in her ear, though his heart was fluttering madly and he felt more excited than she did.

"You will not let them take me away again?" she continued. "Oh, say that you will watch over and protect me!"

"I will do what I can, Viola," he answered, adding with a slight tinge of bitterness in his tone: "But perhaps you would prefer that Sandford Newton should be your protector."

She regarded him strangely with her lustrous blue eyes, which were filled with tears.

"He is nothing to me," she said. "I will explain all that may seem incomprehensible to you, but not now. Take me away, from this horrible place. You must—you must, or I shall go mad!"

"Come," he answered, leading her towards the door.

Old Martha barred their progress, but he pushed her rudely out of the way, saying:

"Stand on one side, or you shall go to the police-station with your mistress."

This threat had the effect of causing her to shrink into a corner, and they passed out into the garden. He told her how he had found out her hiding place, and calmed her by the assurance that she should not be molested any more. Though his words were kind and his looks soft, she seemed to feel that there was a change in his manner.

She did not dare to ask him. A woman's heart is so sensitive that she can always tell if her lover is in the slightest degree altered, though his words may give her no clue to what is passing in his mind. Meanwhile Dubois bowed politely to La Dama Blanca, who shrank back terrified.

"We are old acquaintances," he exclaimed. "You may not be aware that I have a warrant for your removal to Paris, where the juge d'instruction will be very glad to see you, but for the sake of old times I do not want to be hard on you. We know that you took money away with you. How much will you give me to let you go, say, to Rome or some continental city, where your undoubted talents will be appreciated?"

She saw his drift and accepted the situation



in a moment. Putting her hand in the bosom of her dress she extracted a roll of bank-notes, which she handed to him.

"If that will content you," she said, "it is yours. I will leave London to-night. Anything, anything but the dock, the prisoner's dress, the gaol."

Dubois examined the notes, nodded his head in a satisfied manner, and intimated that he had nothing more to say.

"I wish you a pleasant journey, madame la comtesse," he cried. "You need not trouble yourself to communicate with your friend Menzies; I shall see her shortly, and will inform her of your intended departure. Adieu!"

Leaving La Dama following him venomously with her eyes, and looking completely prostrated, he joined Herbert Conyers and Viola, who were just passing through the gate which Herbert had opened. Getting into the carriage they started for town, Viola laughing and crying by turns.

She was so much excited that Herbert could not talk to her in a rational manner. He therefore contented himself with soothing her as he would have done with a fretful child; and in reality he was so perturbed himself that he scarcely knew what to say.

She pressed his hand and seemed happy to have him with her. It was a great relief to both of them when the doctor's house was reached. Lady Clementina kissed her affectionately. Dr. Newton smiled grimly as he thought of the discomfiture of Lord Tarlington. Sandford looked sheepish. She scarcely noticed him; all her attention being engrossed by Herbert, who, however, left before dinner to return to Merton.

He intended to break off his engagement with Libby Brady, be the consequences what they might, and then he hoped by throwing himself on Viola's mercy to obtain her forgiveness. It was an unpleasant task, but he felt he could only be happy with Viola, and he was content to incur the reproaches of Libby and the anger of her father.

We will leave him to his bitter reflections as he journeyed to Merton, while we follow Dubois, whose work was not yet done. He went direct to Madame Menzies' house and inquired for her, being told by the servant that she had left England.

"Left! When did she go?" he demanded, in surprise.

"An hour ago, sir. Madame received a telegram from Merton Abbey. She gave orders for the house to be shut up and departed in a cab. I was to refer anyone who called to her solicitor."

"A diable with her solicitor!" cried Dubois, angrily, as he strode away.

He saw that the countess had been quick-witted enough to telegraph as once to Madame Menzies, who had taken the alarm and flown away in dismay. Finding his chance of getting anything in that direction remarkably slender, he determined to abandon the idea and devote his attention to Lord Tarlington, to whose house he accordingly bent his steps.

Lord Tarlington was at home in his study walking up and down making up a speech which he was going to deliver that evening at one of the City Companies Guilds, of which he was to be the honoured guest. Taking the card from his be-plumed and liveried servant he said:

"Dubois, Private Detective, Strand. What does he want? Show him in."

Dubois was ushered into the presence of the nobleman, and saw at a glance that he was confronted by a determined person as full of resources as himself, and one with whom he would have to wage a wary war.

"Your pleasure with me?" cried Lord Tarlington.

"I have come to arrest your lordship!" replied Dubois, boldly.

"For what?"

"Being an accomplice with your brother, the Hon. Fitzharding Sutton, and Madame Menzies, the mesmerist, in the abduction and forcible detention of one Viola Harcourt, the said Viola

Harcourt having been kept by the Countess di Cazenova in strict seclusion, but being now with her friends, Lady Clementina Sutton and Dr. Newton."

At this communication Lord Tarlington staggered as if he had been shot, but recovering himself instantly, said:

"How can I prove that this is true? You may be an impostor."

"The proof is easy enough, but I suppose if I tell you that I have just brought the girl from Merton Abbey you will be satisfied. If not," continued Dubois, "you can send to Doctor Newton's house and ascertain the fact."

"Do the regular police know anything of this?" asked his lordship.

"At present they do not. It is my case. I shall rely on the evidence of Madame Menzies to link your brother and yourself with the outrage, but having got the girl, I personally do not wish to press hardly on you."

An expression of relief came over his lordship's face.

"You are not a rich man, Monsieur Dubois?" he exclaimed.

"Far from it, my lord," replied the detective.

"Very well. What can I buy you for? Every man has his price."

Dubois reflected a moment, after which he named a sum which ran into four figures, but large as it was his lordship at once consented to pay it.

"You are a gentleman," said Dubois, as he received a cheque. "I have a respect for anyone who pays well, and I will venture to give you some advice. You have a yacht, I believe. Take all the money you can get and go aboard your yacht for a cruise. It is useless to fight Dr. Newton; he must win the case in the end for Miss Harcourt."

"Possibly. But he will have to proclaim himself a scoundrel. If I fall, he falls with me. I will fight the case; they shall not have the property without a struggle. I am a bitter enemy, and the doctor's triumph shall be a barren one as far as he is concerned. Thanks for your advice, sir, but I cannot take it in its entirety. As far as the cruise in the yacht is concerned, I like that idea, and will go abroad, but my lawyer shall fight in my absence."

Dubois assured his lordship that he would not molest him in any way. It seemed the best plan to avoid arrest to leave the country, and this Lord Tarlington concluded to do. The detective had every reason to be satisfied with his day's work, and departed in high spirits at the result of his cleverness.

He only regretted that he failed to get money out of Madame Menzies, as he might have played very successfully on her fears. His lordship did not feel in the humour to go to the grand dinner that evening to which he was invited, so he sent an excuse on the ground of sudden indisposition.

"Baffled!" he exclaimed, "foiled, but not defeated. The law is slow. I must see my brother Fitz. Something may turn up, though. I feel like a man who is standing on the brink of a precipice."

## CHAPTER XVI.

### BREAKING AN ENGAGEMENT.

I saw thee weep—the big bright tear  
Came o'er the ivory of thine eye,  
And then methought it did appear  
A violet dropping dew.

We are again in the garden of Mr. Brady. The birds are singing as merrily, the flowers look as pretty and smell as sweet as formerly, but there seems to Herbert Conyers, as he takes a seat in a rose-covered arbour, that the birds are out of tune. Their songs produce discord, not harmony; the flowers for him have no perfume, and his jaundiced eyes can see no beauty in their many colours.

Evening is coming on—soon the shades of night will fall—yet he sits there, not daring to go into the house and speak out like a man to

the girl he is going to betray. It is a terrible situation, and one which makes his face grow pale and his lips twitch convulsively, as if he was undergoing some physical torture which racked his bones.

Presently he heard a light, elastic footstep on the soft, shell-covered gravel, and a sweet voice singing: "Oh, the marriage bells are ringing." It is Libby Brady. They will not ring for her so soon as she expects, he thinks, and his conscience pricks him so that the perspiration stands out in big beads on his forehead.

Libby had let her hair down because it was so warm. She had tied it near the neck with a bit of blue ribbon, and it need not be said that she looked charming. Though of a different style of beauty from Viola, they might regard one another as rivals for the admiration of the opposite sex; for while many would prefer the more commanding beauty of Viola, the soft, melting, tender prettiness of Libby would appeal to those who liked doll babies for wives.

"Are you there, dear?" exclaimed Libby, in surprise. "Why, how long have you been home?"

"Not long," he repeated, laconically.

"You naughty boy," said Libby, shaking her finger playfully at him; "I shall have to scold you."

That is always a woman's privilege before marriage. Afterwards, I believe, she has to recognise her husband as her lord and master. She took a seat by his side, and he moved away as if he wanted to make more room for her.

"Why move away when I draw near, Bertie?" she asked; "I have so much to tell you. What do you think? This afternoon I went to the milliner's and chose my wedding dress. I am sure you will like it, because it is the sweetest thing I ever saw."

With a great effort Herbert Conyers managed to speak.

"I am afraid you will not require it just yet, ma belle," he said, with an air of affected gaiety.

Her countenance fell, and she looked terrified, as well she might.

"What do you mean? Your words frighten me. Speak to me—speak to me, Bertie, dear, dear Bertie! What have I done? Do you not love me any more?" she cried.

"I—I—the fact is, Libby—Miss Brady—I have been plain. I—I did not know my own mind. It is necessary that I should break off the engagement. Try to think well of me, my dear little girl. I am not worthy of you. In time you will find someone else who—"

He could say no more. He broke down utterly. His words were very cruel, and they cut Libby to the heart. There was no mistaking their import; they required no explanation. He was tired of her; he had deceived her. She had done nothing to deserve this treatment at his hands, and it made it all the more hard to bear. Yet she was a brave girl, and had all the instincts of a lady; she did not give way. He displayed more cowardice than her. Her heart was breaking. All the happiness she had looked forward to as his wife was dissipated to the winds.

"You mean what you say, Mr. Conyers?" she asked at length, in a voice tremulous with emotion.

"Yes; I am sincerely sorry. You have my deepest sympathy, I assure you, and—"

"Hush, if you please," Libby interrupted; "if I am not worthy of your love I do not want your sympathy. You have broken off the engagement which existed between us, and any explanation you have to give of your singular conduct perhaps you will be good enough to make to my father."

She rose to go, looking pale and rigid as a statue cut out of stone.

"Libby," he exclaimed, "one word before you go."

"Not one," she answered. "All is at an end between you and I, Herbert Conyers. I am only a girl, and know little of the world, but I do not think you have behaved like a gentleman."

With this parting shot she hurried away. No sooner had she got out of his sight and hearing than she gave way to the pent-up feelings of her bruised heart and burst into a copious flood of tears.

"I loved him! Oh, I loved him so," she sobbed, "and woe is me, alas! I love him still. Why do I live? I should be happier where I dead."

At this moment Mr. Brady came out of the house, looking for Libby in the gloaming. He saw her shadowy form, and called out:

"Libby! Where's my little girl? Come, child, the dinner is ready. Have you seen Conyers?"

"Yes, papa," she replied, in the same broken voice. "He is alone in the arbour, and I think he wants to speak to you."

The fond father was struck by the alteration in his daughter, and at once saw that something was wrong.

"Crying, my baby," he exclaimed; "what has happened? If anyone has done anything to make my darling miserable I'll—I'll horse-whip him within an inch of his life. I will, by Jove!"

"Bertie d-does not l-love me any longer," she said.

"Has he told you so?"

"He has b-broken off the engagement, papa. He is in the arbour."

"Go indoors to your mother, my dear. I will speak to Mr. Conyers, and he shall have a piece of my mind which he won't like, I'll wager."

Mr. Brady walked rapidly down the garden path. The moon had just risen, and its pale rays revealed Bertie sitting in the arbour, as if he were awaiting with stolid indifference what might happen next.

"Why, Conyers," cried Mr. Brady, "what is all this I hear from my daughter?"

"I have asked to be released from my engagement, sir, and Miss Brady has tacitly consented to such a course," was Herbert's reluctant reply.

"Indeed, sir, indeed," said Mr. Brady, with rising fury; "but I have not been consulted. I want you to understand that I am a factor in this matter, and an important one, too. What are your reasons for acting in this disgraceful manner?"

"I have none to give."

"Eh! What! Not a word? Do you mean to cast any imputation on my daughter?"

"Heaven forbid! Far from it. Miss Brady is an angel, and I—I am an idiot, and, if you like, a villain," Herbert hastened to say.

"Upon my word, I am inclined to call you by a harsher name than that. You are a despicable scoundrel, sir, a hound, a viper. Yes, I have been harbouring a viper in my house, and the vile reptile has turned and stung me. I am getting to be an old man now. In my younger days people did not act in this way. I should have called you out and shot you, sir—shot you, sir, dead as a stone."

Herbert hid his face in his hands. He felt that he deserved all the reproaches and insults. What could he say in return? It was nearly over now. Mr. Brady would order him out soon, and he would go and try to find peace. Peace indeed! Would he ever know what peace was again. Even if he should be happy with Viola, the sight of poor Libby's pretty face all stained with tears and quivering with internal agony would haunt him for ever.

"Do you know one thing, sir?" continued Mr. Brady.

Herbert took away his hands from his face and looked up. His punishment was not yet over, and hard as it was to bear, he had to endure it.

"You have been playing with hearts—with my heart, my daughter's heart, her mother's heart, for we all feel this thing, and the law does not allow a man to play with hearts. I will expose you and hold you up to the derision of the world and the contempt of your friends, if you have any."

"I cannot help it," replied Herbert; "it is my misfortune not my fault. Bear with me;

try and think well of me. I am half distracted as it is. Do not overwhelm me."

"Go, young man, and take my curse with you. May it weigh on you till the day of your death. Heaven may forgive you for the great wrong you have done me and mine, but I never can. Would to heaven you had never set foot in this house!"

Here grief took the place of anger, and not wishing to appear unmanly, he turned away into a thick shrubbery to hide his tears. Herbert did not dare to enter the house. As for dinner he did not care to eat. The sight of food would have sickened him. He intended to send for his things, and stealing out of the garden gate like a criminal or a thief in the night, he went up to town like one distracted.

That evening he sought the seclusion of his father's house, being only consoled by the sweet reflection that after all Viola would be his. Of course he had to tell his father all, and he was blamed for his conduct. He had given up his practice, offended Mr. Lacy, rendered himself liable to an action at law for breach of promise of marriage, and after abandoning assured happiness and prosperity, thrown himself on the uncertain sea of the future.

(To be Continued.)

## TWICE REJECTED;

OR,

## THE NAMELESS ONE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"The Baronet's Son," "Who Did It?" &c., &c.

### CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE sick chamber of Hugo Cardwell was by no means lessening in the gloom that overspread it on the announcement of the accident which had brought the sufferer thither. Signora Trebelli tended the sufferer with unremitting care, and carried out all the directions of the doctor with a zeal and untiring tenderness which appeared to denote a real and practical affection such as few women display for one so recently known and so much their junior in years and knowledge of the world.

He would do nothing, take nothing, save from her direction, or from her hand, and to say sooth, he was utterly and entirely her devoted slave, though he knew it not even in his most inmost thoughts. At last the crisis seemed at hand. Inflammation was rapidly advancing, and only the most severe and dangerous remedies were pronounced possible by the doctors in attendance.

"If these are not adopted we cannot answer that mortification will not set in," they said, "and yet it would be wrong to disguise they are attended with a certain risk. Are you prepared to accept it on the young man's behalf, signora?"

"I will take time to consider, signori. It is too great a responsibility to accept without deliberation."

"True, if the young man is not related to you it must be difficult, signora," they returned, "but we fully believe you will do only your duty if you accept the burden. We tell you it is certain death in one case, and possible, very probable recovery in the other."

"You can give me twenty-four hours?" she said.

"Yes, but no more. It is impossible to predict the result," returned the surgeon.

The Signora Trebelli bowed, and the doctors withdrew. A few brief moments of deliberation and then she stood by the young sufferer's side.

"Hugo, do you remember that you once assured me that I could make you happy, and that you could not well live without me?" she asked, softly.

His mind was fast giving way under the

sufferings of his body now. Bianca was all to him. He clung to her like a drowning man to a rope.

"Yes, yes. Why do you doubt it? It is true—true, and more so now than it was then," he replied, feebly. "You would not leave me, Bianca?"

"Suppose I find that it would be needful, and that I could only remain with you and act for you in certain circumstances—I mean in a certain relation to you—what then, Hugo? Would you let me leave you?"

"Never, never! So long as I live you must remain with me, Bianca. I can feel it now. I do love you—yes, to my heart. I wish you were my wife; you could not leave me then on any account."

"I am afraid that would not be inevitable in some cases, Hugo," she replied, shaking her head gravely, "but for me it would be a tie that could never be broken. But that was only to take place if you were better, Hugo," she added, questioningly.

"I do not care; it shall be; I will have it so. You told me you could make me all right, and I know you have nursed me like a wife or a mother. Oh, this pain, this burning pain! I'd give you half my fortune if you could cure it, Bianca," he pleaded.

"Perhaps I could if you are trustful and give me the power," she replied; "but that rests with you, and only you, Hugo."

"You mean by marrying you?"

"Yes."

It was a strong measure even for the suffering and helpless youth to take to himself a wife whose position was comparatively unknown, whose age exceeded his, and whose character was to him utterly doubtful in its qualities.

"I will, I will. I don't care what they say; they cannot unmarry us any way," said the youth, passionately. "Only get me better, and don't leave me, Bianca."

"I will not, Hugo; I will be a true and loving wife to you so long as you live, only it will be difficult to convince others that I did not marry you for wealth and rank," she added, doubtfully.

"It does not signify what anyone says, and I'll soon show them that. You shall have all I can leave you, Bianca, if I don't get well over this bout. It will be a great joke if they all are cheated of the money."

And he laughed a sort of delirious laugh that had little meaning save the vague idea of giving annoyance and disappointment to those he considered as his natural enemies. Bianca gave him another of the tender caresses that she usually found so effectual, and then administering a soothing dose, she left him to arrange for the intended ceremony.

Hugo had duly professed the Roman Catholic faith since his claim to the marquise had been in question, and he had sufficient interest and agencies at work to secure the services of a priest, who appeared with suspicious activity on the summons of the bride elect.

The ceremony was quickly performed in consideration of the invalid's state, and Bianca Trebelli was in name and idea, at any rate, the Marchese di Spinola, unless some untraced circumstance was at hand to disprove the claim of the presumed heir to the title and estate.

Days passed on. The treatment that had been arranged for by the surgeons was begun, and to do Bianca justice she was unremitting in her care and attention to the sufferer; but still the crisis came nearer and nearer, and no one save the doctors and, it might be, herself, could imagine what might be the result.

What did the new made wife, the possible widow believe? No one but herself could actually tell her secret feeling. No ulterior motive, no veiled purpose was to be detected in her conduct.

"Madame, the final experiment is at hand," said the leading doctor, after some interval of this kind of tending. "We cannot delay longer. The inflammation is rising to its height. We must give the last and most violent remedies in our repertoire, and then with this warning we



say, in his country's diction, "God defend the right," for all else would fail to save him."

Bianca shivered slightly.

"Ought he to know?" she said. "It seems as if I almost had the responsibility. I dare not, signori," she said, earnestly.

"That is for you to decide. As his wife it seems that you ought to decide, madame. There is no one superior in our ideas."

"Yes, there may be his own relatives. He is not a man of common rank or expectations," she said. "It were better to get his own consent, and that you should witness it. You need not alarm him needlessly. Tell him all depends on this, and surely he must give way."

It was perhaps a job not too agreeable to the doctors, but they could scarcely decline so reasonable a request.

"We are going to give you a certain, as we believe, remedy for your suffering, signor. We have no other help to give you to ease your pain or save your life. No human skill can do more. Are you content? Your loving wife is fearful to act without your knowledge and acquiescence."

Hugo looked lovingly at Bianca.

"She is good and true—yes, and I trust her," he said, feebly. "I believe she loves me, and she shall be rewarded. She shall have all I can give her. Thank you, signori. Send the notary, the doctor, or whatever you call him. I will take care she gets all I have to leave."

There was a delirious excitement in his manner that was scarcely to be trusted, but still it was no business of the doctors, and they promised compliance and a speedy return to watch the case.

Ere many hours were over there was a doctor of some repute in the sick chamber. A document was drawn up that conveyed to Bianca Marchese di Spinola all that was in the young man's power to give. And some brief interval afterwards the violent and most desperate remedy was administered that could alone, as was stated, save life or avert the rapidly approaching crisis.

Bianca's hand did tremble somewhat as she held the dose to the invalid's lips; but if so it was not from any guilty consciousness. She did from her very heart desire his life. It was at once her interest and her wish so to do, but still she was but an adventurer on the world's wide sea.

There was a quietness almost of death in the room of the sufferer that brought a cold chill to the watcher's heart. The clock ticked on; the hands whirled round in their slow, regular course. There could not be much longer suspense now.

Bianca could scarcely endure the fearful stillness, and at last she believed she heard the patient move. She rose and tottered to the bed with trembling limbs and pallid cheeks and misty eyes which scarcely could bear the spectacle which might present itself.

Hugo was young and suffering and trusting and with a bright future before him. The drops stood on Bianca's brow, and in her eyes spoke of the calculating condition that had led her to forward and make smooth the path to the tyro's ruin. She was not altogether so coldly mercenary and arrogant as the haughty and hardened cousin of the unhappy Hugh Loraine.

#### CHAPTER XXXV.

"My boy! my boy! Where is he? Oh, am I to be punished thus fearfully? It is an enemy's work, but it shall not succeed. No, no, I am not to be thus daunted and browbeaten. I have not lived all these years for nothing," muttered the harsh, agitated voice of Maria Somers. "I will never give in—never; they shall find that to their cost. If I died, if I were tortured, it would not avail. I will never yield, never."

She was becoming simply desperate in her alarm and indignation at Hugo's absence. True he had more than once disappeared for some days, and then returned with a sullen refusal to

give any account of himself, and a haughty hint that the high-born heir of the Spinolas was not to be controlled and over-ruled by a low-born woman; but this was a longer interval than had ever occurred since she had last seen him, and what was more, the lawsuit was to be quickly decided, and the marchese had more than once sent to request an interview with his presumed heir.

There was a clang of the hall bell, a hand on the door, and then a quick, masculine step that made her heart beat high with hope and uncertainty. Was it Hugo? Before she could fully decide how she should receive him the door of her chamber opened, and Geoffrey Sabine walked in. There was that in his look and bearing that boded no good to her eager hopes and expectations.

"You have returned, then, Mr. Sabine," she said, coldly. "I am much honoured, of course, by this speedy visit."

"You need not take any compliment in the matter, Mrs. Somers," he said, calmly. "We lawyers are not accustomed to do anything just for courtesy or flattering attentions. If I had nothing to say you may be very certain I should not have troubled you with a visit, my dear madame."

"Perhaps not, so that being the case, I must request you to tell me as speedily as possible," returned the old lady. "I am even now waiting for the return of my—I mean the young marchese. He is hot-tempered, and bitter again against you, so that it will be best you should not meet."

"That is of little importance, Mrs. Somers. I know, unfortunately, too much of your grandson's character, which will certainly do but small justice either to his real or assumed position; but that is not the point in question. It is to be clearly determined whether he is your daughter's son or whether he is the son of the Marchese di Spinola, and I unhesitatingly say that I can now distinctly prove that he is the former. I have no longer any doubt, any fear on that head—none. Now you have heard all in one word."

"Which I should be very sorry to accept as in the least degree final," sneered Mrs. Somers. "It is part of your game. What do you charge me with?"

"I charge you with palming off Hugo Cardwell as the substitute of the deceased lawful son of the late Marchese di Spinola and Bertha Baverie, his wife, and striving to obtain for him the inheritance and the title that belongs to his twin sister. That is my charge," said Geoffrey, firmly.

Mrs. Somers kept her composure in rigid stillness until the last words came. Then she started as if a galvanic battery had seized her, and her features became a livid yellow.

"What do you mean by such idiotic inventions?" she cried. "There was no twin sister, none."

"There was, and you know it," returned Geoffrey, resolutely. "The late marchese had twins—a son and daughter. The son died ere he was a year old; the daughter is still living. You appear to have delayed informing the family of the death of the child, so it is fair to imagine that you early formed the nefarious scheme you are now trying to carry out, though it was some years ere you succeeded in finding a favourable opportunity."

"And how did you discover—how will you prove this tale?" asked the woman, angrily.

"Very easily, when once the train was laid and the clue obtained," returned Geoffrey. "In the first instance, it is certain from the watermark of the paper that gives the birth of your grandson that he could not be the son of the Marchese di Spinola, as it is dated several months after the birth, and soon after the death of the child, according to the register of the death of the marchese; and besides, there was the register of a twin sister in the register, of which I have obtained a copy, and of whom you have never spoken. In fact, the whole affair has been a gigantic fraud, and I tell you this as part of the evidence I have to bring, that you may, if you will, confess without further scandal

the truth, and spare your old age privation and a public reproach and disgrace. Mrs. Somers, you are old enough to be my grandmother. You have no ordinary character and intellect. You have displayed it but too well in the plans you have laid and the way in which they would have been carried out. You have no sin of ignorance to plead. Now, repent and confess ere it is too late."

It was strange to see that earnest mentor, severe in youthful beauty and virtue and firm, unshrinking resolution, thus pleading, as it were, to the grey-haired, aged woman lying helpless and rigid before him. Still there was no sign of yielding. His appeal, however, decidedly failed of its effect; there was not the least quivering, no lowering of the eyelids, no blanching of the eyes. But as Geoffrey was about to resume his pleading, or, it might be, to leave the apartment in despair, she suddenly spoke.

"Where is this imaginary girl that is to snatch the inheritance from my boy?" she inquired, faintly.

Geoffrey shook his head with a sharp, cynical smile.

"No, no, Mrs. Somers; you have taught us a lesson so far. I shall certainly not give you an opportunity of frustrating our plans for the restoration of the young heiress by informing you of her whereabouts. I suspect, nevertheless, you know it almost as well as I do, and I shall, therefore, lose no time, you may be sure, in my proceedings. Come, once more before I leave you, are you willing to confess your fraud on the condition that it will not be punished or exposed further on the part of my client or ourselves as Madame de Cenci's representatives?"

Mrs. Somers closed her eyes in apparently deep thought. Her lips were more than once opened to speak, but in vain. It seemed as if the words would not come. But at last she seemed to have taken her resolution. She moved her hands and clasped them together as if in prayer or violent agitation, and turned to Geoffrey with an appealing look in her still bright eyes as she once more prepared to answer him. But just as the first word trembled on her tongue, and he was eagerly watching to catch it from her harsh, strong accents, the door opened, and the gaunt figure of Mat Somers appeared, with evident horror on his features.

"Molly," he cried, "Molly, here's sad news. Some fellow's come to say that Hugo's just dying, if he's not dead. He's lying at some woman's house, I don't know where, who took him in from an accident, and that's all I can tell at present. What had I better do, old girl?"

The woman's lips and hands were literally palsied. Her cheeks turned to a livid pallor.

"It is the hand of God," she said, in a low, hollow tone; "it is the hand of God. Oh, mercy, mercy!"

There was something touching in the utter despair of that old face, the agony betrayed in the rocking limbs, and the hoarse choking of her stern voice. Even Geoffrey Sabine, with all his natural horror of the fraud which he believed to have been practiced, could not withhold from the stricken woman some pity and sympathy in her woeful bereavement.

"Be composed," he said; "perhaps it is exaggerated. These reports are often worse than the truth. If you like I will go myself and inquire into the matter. Where is the unfortunate youth?" he added, turning to Mat Somers.

"That's the address; I can't pronounce these outlandish names," said the man, sullenly, handing to him a paper with a few words written on it.

"Shall I go and find your grandson?" he said, with a marked emphasis on the last word. She shook her head; she could not speak.

"I will not be long," he continued, "in bringing you tidings of him. If you like your brother-in-law can accompany me."

"No, no, let him stay. I can trust you," her parched lips uttered.

And Geoffrey at once left the villa on his mournful errand; for mournful it was to see that reckless and disappointed youth lying on the bed of death, and tended by one whom he

(Geoffrey) believed to be an utter stranger to him.

"He certainly cannot live many hours, perhaps minutes," said Bianca, when Geoffrey had arrived at her house and been shown into the sick room. "I thought it best to send to his friends."

"That should have been done sooner," said Geoffrey, rather coldly; "but still, signora, you appear to have taken every care of the poor youth, and I am sure his grandmother will be exceedingly obliged and grateful to you."

"You mean his relative, the Marchese de Spinola?" said Bianca, in a low tone.

Before Geoffrey could reply the death rattle sounded in his throat, his eyes rolled painfully from side to side, and in another moment the unhappy and misguided Hugo was a corpse. Bianca made no further comment on the presumed rank or circumstances of the deceased, nor on the relationship she claimed to him; but Geoffrey was sufficiently experienced to suspect that there was some mystery hidden under the remarkable care that she had taken of a stranger and the secrecy that had been preserved as to his whereabouts.

"It is a pity, signora, that you did not give earlier information as to the condition of this young man," he said, gravely. "You are doubtless aware that you subject yourself to unpleasant comments, and also that it has been a source of the greatest disquiet to his grandmother?"

Bianca shrugged her shoulders with a disdainful smile; but she only replied, in her usual easy accents:

"You do me injustice, signor. I would not blame the dead, and doubtless the poor fellow had good reason for his conduct; but he never would hear of any relative being informed of his state, and it was only by an accident that I heard Mrs. Somers was his grandmother. I suppose it was her daughter who married the father of the poor young signor?" she said, with an air of innocence that well-nigh imposed even on Geoffrey's wary experience.

"It was the daughter of Mrs. Somers who married this young man's father," he answered, coolly; "and now I will consult her and take her directions for his funeral. It must be a great annoyance to you to have your house thus occupied, signora, and the account of the money you have expended ought in justice to be rendered to Mrs. Somers."

His eyes were fixed on the Italian's soft face as he spoke, but it was unmoved in the calm pensiveness that seemed natural to it.

"I shall arrange for it. I will not fail to have an interview with the relative of the deceased," she said; "but it will be in my own house and way. As you are a complete stranger to me, signor, I shall not enter into private affairs with you."

And she crossed to the door and opened it as a mute but irresistible argument that he was to leave the apartment. He went thoughtfully out. The events of the last few hours had completely changed the situation so far as his immediate business was concerned. The death of the unlucky Hugo had put an end, of course, to the pretensions of the claim to the title and estates of the noble family of the Spinolas.

But then to accomplish all that he wanted was perhaps more difficult from that very death. There was justice to be gained for the living as well as justice to be dealt out to the wrongdoers. Geoffrey was by no means sure that this very event happening at this moment might not be rather a fresh obstacle in the cause he had at heart. Ah, poor Geoffrey Sabine! There was a terrible pain crushed back in his breast even while his purpose was firm and his intentions unselfish and noble.

(To be Continued.)

It is said that a 'fancy ball' is shortly to be given by a lady, who will insist on every lady making her own dress.

## THE PEARL OF THE OCEAN;

OR,

### THE AVENGERS FOILED.

#### CHAPTER IV.

PEARL was silent all the way home, and all Livingstone's tender efforts to rouse her into her own natural self were in vain. Ascribing her singular appearance to her fright at the shower, and the awe she must have felt at the strangeness of Bett Morgan's abode—he kissed her forehead, and consigned her to the charge of Mrs. Noyes.

But the next day, as early as etiquette would allow, he was at the cottage. Mrs. Noyes met him at the door with a countenance pale and disturbed. He asked at once for Pearl.

"She is not down yet," said Mrs. Noyes, "the first time I ever knew her to be so late. Something has come over her since yesterday—something dreadful. I'm almost a mind to believe that awful Bett Morgan has bewitched her! There used to be such things in olden times, you know. And Pearl has acted so strangely! She didn't kiss me last night when I left her, and she has never failed of doing that ever since she came here, a wee child. Never before! And when I put my lips to her forehead, she shrank away from me, and told me to let her alone. Oh dear! I wish Hugh would come home."

"But I must see her at once," said Max impatiently. "Please to tell her so."

Mrs. Noyes went upstairs, and soon returned, to say that Pearl was up, and would be down in half an hour.

"Then I will wait," said Max. And going out on the piazza he paced up and down with a pale troubled face, and a restless air.

To tell the truth, he had been seriously annoyed by the rumours which were afloat in the village concerning Pearl. It was a country neighbourhood, and people in such places will talk.

And when it was known that Pearl had more than once been seen in company with the mysterious tenant of the Roost, they were not slow to circulate the matter, in terms anything but favourable to the girl.

And besides, she had been seen with Rob Morgan—and the fellow was handsome—though dreadfully deformed, they said—and who knew? There had been as strange things before. One thing is certain.

Young Morgan was very fond of her, for a few days before, a clerk in the shop where Rob went to purchase necessities, had ventured to joke the hunchback in regard to the pretty Pearl of the Ocean, speaking of her in a way not altogether respectful, and had received in return a blow between the eyes, which made him see stars for a week afterwards.

These reports, with various little exaggerations, had come to the ears of Max, and though he had perfect confidence in Pearl, it nettled him that her name should be bandied about from lip to lip in connection with that of so suspicious a personage as Bett Morgan.

Pearl must have pitied the woman, he thought, and spoken kindly to her—it was like her to be charitable to all. He would ask her not to be familiar with her for the future.

This trouble must have shown itself upon his face—for Jerry coming up to the cottage for his eleven o'clock lunch, removed his pipe from his mouth to administer consolation.

"Don't you go for to 'taking it so hard," said he, "I know just how it feels. I've seen troubles and tribulations in my days. Heaps of 'em. Why, when Polly Spigot jilted me, after I had wooed her all winter, and spent any amount of money on her, I thought I should have swooned. If it hadn't been such a cold, raw day I should have committed sevenside. But I knowed the

water would be horrid cold; and getting wet into cold water allus gives me the rheumatiz. So I went home, and went down suiler, and got a pitcher of cider, and drank two of marm's new glass goblets twice full of it, and immediately I felt better. That night I went over and sed Jerusha Peastill, and it was all right. I found out several things that I didn't know afore. And among them was the facts, that Jerusha's eyes was blacker than Polly's, and she didn't wear corsets. If there's anything I hate to do, it's to hug a gal that wears corsets." And Jerry passed on into the dining-room.

By-and-bye Pearl came downstairs. Max heard and recognised her step, and was by her side in a moment. She motioned him into the parlour, and she followed him and closed the door. Looking at her, Max could hardly realise that she was the Pearl Noyes that he had wooed and won.

She had lost all her fresh youthful colour, she looked old and worn. Her complexion was colourless as marble, her eyes surrounded by livid circles, and were dim and lustrous, and their expression was perfectly blank, like those of a dead person.

Her dress partook also of the change. In place of the light, cloud fabrics which she usually wore was a dress of heavy black cloth, unrelieved by a single ray of colour, and which, by contrast, enhanced the ghastliness of her countenance. She passed by him, and took a seat with the width of the room between them.

"Pearl," he said, "what is the matter? Why do you not speak to me?"

She opened her lips, and made the attempt, but the words died away, and there was no audible sound. He crossed the room, and took a seat beside her, clasping her cold hands in his, and trying vainly to induce her head to rest in its old place on his shoulder. She sat erect, cold and calm.

"Pearl, what dreadful thing has happened? What change is this? Tell me. Surely I have a right to know."

She turned her great sad eyes upon his face, but he could read nothing there. Once he could see her soul in her eyes, now it almost seemed as if the soul had departed. A terrible fear came over him. What if she were losing her reason? What if she was going mad? He snatched her to his breast almost fiercely, at the thought, as though his love could save her from impending fate.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed, "do not look at me thus. Speak to me, Pearl, are you bereft of reason? Are you going mad?"

"I hope so," she answered, drawing away from him.

"You hope so! Pearl, tell me what it all means! Do you not see how you are making me suffer? Have you no pity?"

"Pity? There is no pity in the world."

He took the face she had averted in his two hands, and turning to the light scanned it long and earnestly. But it gave no revelation. He kissed the responseless lips, and smoothed back the golden hair as he had done a thousand times before, watching for the quick blushes that were wont to spring to her cheek, and the love light to her eye; but they came not. Her cheek remained cold and colourless, and her eyes a blank.

"Pearl, you believe that I love you, do you not? You know that whatever affects you affects me also? If you have a sorrow, I want to share it. I believe that something of this is owing to your acquaintance with Bett Morgan. Why have you suffered that acquaintance to continue?"

"It was fate, I suppose."

"Fate should be scorned when it trifles with a woman's good name. Pearl, did you know that people have coupled your name and hers in a way most disgraceful to you? That they have even dared to accuse you of undue intimacy with her hunchback son?"

She started and shuddered like one exposed to the north wind.

"And you, Max Livingstone, did you credit the report?"

"No, dearest! a thousand times no! But I



want you to be above suspicion. I will not have the mouth of scandal prate of the woman I am going to marry."

"Marry! we shall never marry," she said, hoarsely, "never in all the world! But that thought out of your mind, it is simply impossible!"

"What do you mean? What am I to think? You pledged yourself to me solemnly, and now you say you shall never marry. What shall I infer?"

"Whatever you please. It does not matter."

"Do you not remember that you said you loved me, Pearl? That life would not be life away from me."

"Yes, yes; I remember everything."

"And now you tell me that we are never to be more to each other?"

"Yes."

"Explain yourself."

"There is nothing to explain."

"Pearl, I cannot comprehend you. I believe you are going to be ill. You are cold and pale and nerveless, I will send for Dr. Smith on at once."

Her hand on his arm restrained him.

"No, I am perfectly well. I need no physician. Feel my pulse. Is it not cool and steady? I am, also, perfectly sane. But listen to me while I do have my reason. Heaven only knows how long that may be. I tell you solemnly that I shall never marry you. There is an obstacle."

"Obstacles are nothing!" he said, impatiently. "Tell me what it is, and if there be power in heaven and earth to remove it, it shall be done!"

"There is no power in all the world which can remove it. It is fixed as fate."

"In what does it consist? Tell me that."

"I can tell you nothing. Do not urge me. You inflict pain upon me by so doing, and you waste strength. Oh, Max, Max! if you really loved me, do not ask me a single question."

"If I ever loved you! Pearl you are dearer to me than my own soul. Nothing shall separate us, so long as I feel you love me. Not even death itself. For if I die I will take you with me, and if you die I will bear you company." "Oh, if we could!" she exclaimed, wildly, "if we could but die together! But it cannot be. It is too much to ask of Heaven. We must live, both of us—live and suffer."

"Shall I believe that you are false to me?"

"False!" how her face gleamed, and the fingers he held closed over his hand like iron, then relaxed suddenly. "Think so if you will. It will be better. You will soon forget a woman you believed to be false."

"You are not false, Pearl. I know it and feel it. There is no change in your love for me, and I will not give you up. A foolish whim shall not divide us."

"It is no whim, Max. It is something which even you, did you know all, would admit sufficient to set us wide as the poles asunder."

"Nothing could influence me to such a decision."

"You speak thus because you do not know all. I, who do know, must decide for us both. We must separate. There is no alternative. No middle course. And that we have been lovers, we can never be friends. You must go away where I shall never see you again, but I must stay behind."

"Pearl, can you talk thus? You, who professed to love me, can you talk thus calmly of separation?"

"It must be so, Max. To prolong this interview is agony to both of us. Pray, pray leave me."

"I will leave you for the present, Pearl, but will return when you are calmer. Good-bye, dearest."

"You must not return, Max. Good-bye for ever." And Pearl broke away from him.

"Oh, Heaven! how long can I suffer thus and live?" exclaimed Max.

He strode away fiercely, he noticed nor cared not whither. He believed Pearl had only been amusing herself with him, and the thought made him furious. The next moment, he

remembered the many indisputable proofs of affection which she had given him, and he was almost inclined to doubt the evidence of his own senses.

He took the path leading to the sea, and just as he stood on the Reefer's Cape—a boy out of breath with following his rapid course for the last half mile, came up and placed a note in his hand.

It was from the captain of his ship, informing him that the "Thunder" had been examined and found to need only a few slight repairs; that these repairs had been made, and that on Friday morning she would sail.

It was Tuesday, he must start on Thursday evening for his ship. A day or two before this intelligence would have caused him a sharp pang, because he was to be separated from Pearl, but now he was glad. It was just what he would have asked for.

The sooner he got away from the vicinity of Highfield the better. He would never return to it voluntarily, he said to himself. The great joy, and the great sorrow of his life both had come to him there. Henceforth, he would know no happiness; but far away, where there was nothing to remind him of what might have been he might find peace. And that was all he could expect.

He returned to go back to the Wanderer's Home where he was stopping, and in doing so he came face to face with Bett Morgan. He would have gone on without recognition, but the woman stopped him.

"Stop," she said, in her cool, imperative fashion. "There is no hurry now. You have no lady love in waiting."

He glanced at her, but she did not care for rough looks.

"Spare your stage faces, Mr. Livingstone, for those who can appreciate them. I have little taste for high tragedy. Permit me to ask you a question. Has Pearl Noyes broken her troth with you?"

"By what right do you question me?" he demanded angrily.

"I assume no right. We do things now and then which we have no right to do. Call this one of them, if you like. You need not reply, for I have your answer in your anger. All is over between you?"

"Yes," he answered bitterly, "all is over!"

"And do you know the reason why?"

"She deigned no explanation," he replied, wondering within himself what strange power this woman had to force him to answer her when all his will rebelled against it.

"I can tell you. There is another lover, and his name is Albert Rudolph!"

"Villain!" he hissed between his shut teeth, forgetting for a moment that he was talking to a woman—then recollecting himself, he said, "Excuse me, madame. I did not remember that I was speaking to a lady. But I still declare that what you have uttered is false!"

"And I declare it to be truth. Would you be convinced. To-morrow, at sunset, meet me in Cedar Glen."

"I will be there, if it be but to prove to you how falsely you have spoken," he replied, and then hurried away, angry with himself at the idea of playing the spy over Pearl Noyes, and yet burning with a desire to fathom the cause of the terrible change in her.

Bett looked after him with a smile of grim satisfaction.

"It works well," she said to herself. "Better than I had dared to hope. Patience a little longer, heart. The revenge will be all the sweeter for having been long deferred."

The night was one of moonlight and spring sweetness. Max Livingstone felt like a miserable coward as he stole along the path which led to Cedar Glen. The Glen was only a little way from Mrs. Noyes' cottage; a quiet secluded spot, with a few cedar trees, and a living spring of pure water.

Before he had reached the place appointed, he was joined by Bett Morgan, who restrained his rapid footsteps with a warning gesture, and pointed to a tree in whose shadow stood two

figures. Max recognised them both instantly. There was no mistaking the proud sweep of Colonel Rudolph's broad shoulders, and instinctively he knew Pearl, without taking in the details.

She was leaning against a tree, and Rudolph close beside her was speaking in a low tone. He saw him bend over her, saw his bold arm steal around her waist and then Bett drew him away.

"Let us go," she said, nervously. "It is not right to witness what should have no witnesses. Love-making is never particularly interesting save to the parties concerned."

"I am satisfied," said Max bitterly. "I ask your pardon for accusing you of speaking falsely. I thank you for taking the trouble of proving to me her defection. Good-night!"

He hurried away from her, and sought his hotel. Scarcely had he entered the bar-room when Colonel Rudolph came in. The man's face was flushed, and a triumphant light gleamed in his eyes.

He was smiling, and as he passed Max, he let the smoke of his cigar blow directly into his face. Something in the colonel's intrusive air convinced Max that the insult was premeditated, and he rose quietly and confronted him.

"What is the matter, my friend?" asked Rudolph coolly. "You seem a little out of sorts. Don't agree with you to be jilted, does it? Never mind, man, all the women are deceivers, even to the little Noyes. But she's damned amusing, though somewhat soft on a fellow," and the colonel stroked his moustache.

"To whom do you refer?" asked Livingstone, fiercely.

"To Pearl Noyes, my dear sir; the coquette of Highfield."

"She is not a coquette," returned Livingstone. "You know that as well as I."

"Perhaps I had better have said a *grisette*," returned Rudolph, "only I abhor French."

"Take back your words," said Livingstone, in a tone of great significance, "or, by heaven, you shall answer for them."

"Back! don't get wrathy, lieutenant, about a girl like her, who associates with old Morgan and her crooked son. It's too ridiculous."

"Whatever you may succeed in making of Pearl Noyes, I know that she is as pure as the angels!"

"You think so?" sneeringly.

"I know it. And whoever says anything to the contrary is a villain!"

"Am I to take that as personality," demanded the colonel, flushing.

"As you please."

Rudolph's face grew purple. He flung down his glove on the table before young Livingstone.

"Do you know what that is?" he asked, hotly.

"According to the best of my knowledge, I should say it was a glove," he remarked, calmly.

"Do you understand its meaning?"

"Perhaps Colonel Rudolph will be kind enough to explain."

"Choose your place and weapons. I have nothing to prefer except a request that the time may be very soon."

"Very well. Let it be to-morrow at one o'clock. And the place Wizard's Point. Pistols."

"And seconds?"

"I will have none."

"No seconds? It will be murder if one of us should fall."

"Duelling is murder under any circumstances. The most debased and cowardly thing a man can do. And if I engage in it I will have no seconds to witness my degradation."

"Ha! you shrink from it. You would rather not meet me?"

"Wait until I show the white feather. You can consider the matter settled. Good-night, sir."

And Livingstone left the room and went to his chamber.

(To be Continued.)



[A CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER.]

## PUTTING HIMSELF IN HER PLACE.

MRS. GRAY stood looking out of the window, while her husband put on his hat and gloves, preparatory to going into town. They had just risen from a nicely-spread table, and the room was neatly and tastefully furnished. There was no indication of poverty there, yet Mrs. Gray's voice and manner were faltering as she asked for some postage stamps.

"How many?" asked her husband, curtly.

"Three will do. I thought I would write to mother and the girls."

"Did you ever reckon up, my dear, how much you spend for postage stamps in the course of the year?" asked Mr. Gray, as he lit his fragrant cigar. "Well, let us see. You write, at least, five letters a week, which is fivepence, and fifty-two times five are twenty-one shillings and eightpence a year, to say nothing of paper and envelopes. I haven't a correspondent in the world, outside my business."

"Your friends," said his wife, "live near you, while mine are in another county. Do you wish me to give up writing to them?"

And her face took on an extra tinge of colour.

"By no means. I only mentioned the cost of the thing. But I must go. Good-bye."

"Albert," she said, timidly, but earnestly. Mr. Gray turned back.

"Can you leave me a sovereign? I want to go to town to-day."

"A sovereign?" exclaimed Mr. Gray, in astonishment. "What on earth can you want with a sovereign?"

"I knew you would wonder, but I have needed some money for a long time, to get some necessary articles."

"I gave you ten shillings last week."

"I know it; and I used it for materials to work up for our church fair."

"Church fiddlesticks!" said Mr. Gray, contemptuously. "Well, I can't see what you need a sovereign for."

"Here is a list of what I need," said Mrs. Gray, handing a little slip of paper to her husband:

1 pair kid gloves	...	...	4s. 0d.
1 " slippers	...	...	4s. 6d.
3 " Balbriggan hose	...	...	6s. 0d.
Silesia	...	...	2s. 0d.
Crêpe de lisse	...	...	1s. 6d.

Total ... 18s. 0d.

"Crêpe de lisse! What is that?"

"Ruffling for the neck."

"Will it wash?"

"No."

"I thought so. A sheer waste of money. What fools women are! What would a man think of putting a piece of stiff, white, papery nothing around his neck, that cost eightpence? And

nearly half a sovereign for gloves and slippers! Well, I must say, Annie, you are growing extravagant. I pay for your dresses, bonnets, and all the essentials, without a murmur, that is," said he, with sundry recollections to the contrary, "when they come within reasonable bounds. But these little things, things which are of no earthly account, I should think you might do without."

"They are what no lady can do without. The slippers are to save my nice walking-boots. You yourself noticed my gloves last Sunday, and said you detested a soiled or torn glove. Stockings are rather necessary in our land, and—"

"Say no more. But why is it that these wants come up all at once?"

"For the simple reason that, hitherto, I have bought them myself, with money earned by plain sewing. But since my illness—in the autumn—it hurts my side to sew much, and I have had to give it up."

Mrs. Gray enjoyed her husband's horrified look.

"Plain sewing! Annie, I thought you had more pride."

"I had too much pride to beg of you for what I could earn myself," said she, with some spirit.

"Well, here are seventeen shillings. Try to make that do." And he hurried off.

Mrs. Gray sighed.

"He means well," she said; "but men seem to think women are like children—not to be trusted with money."

Meantime, Mr. Gray was soliloquising.

"Strange, how extravagant women are. Annie is one of the best in the world, but she does not know the worth of money any more than a child. That seventeen shillings will be all spent before night. Women can't keep money."

Mrs. Gray went to town as she intended; but she walked instead of riding, in order to save her money. While in the town she felt faint and hungry from her walk, and would have liked a lunch, but she had no money to spare.

"Oh, by the way, Annie, did you go to town to-day?" asked Mr. Gray, at night.

"Yes," she replied.

"Spent every penny, I'll be bound," jokingly.

"No, I have exactly fourpence left; but I walked both ways, got no crêpe de lisse, and went without luncheon, although faint with hunger."

Mr. Gray looked shocked.

"Why did you not come to me?"

"Because it was out of the way; and because, to tell the truth, I felt too cross."

"Cross with me?"

"Yes," with you, and poor Annie's grievances burst forth.

"To be going along the street hungrier than any beggar, while my husband is known as the successful Mr. Gray. To have no money in my pocket, because my husband thinks I am not to be trusted. Before I married you, I was in business, the same as you. That is, I earned my living by teaching, you earned yours by trading. Now, suppose when we married you had given up your business to assist me, or because it interfered with your new duties, and I allowed you no money to spend, as you chose. I dressed you well, to be sure, but gave you no money, without the whys, wherefore's, and whither's being inquired into, in short, treated you as you do me?"

"You exaggerate the case, Annie. Men and women are differently situated. I should think you would be glad to be saved the trouble of earning a livelihood."

"But just consider the disadvantages of an empty purse. Put yourself in my place. How would you like it?"

"Well if I had only to ask, first rate."

"Well, then, suppose you let me carry the pocket-book for a week."

"But, Annie it isn't practicable. You couldn't attend to business at the warehouse."



"Of course not. It is only your personal expenses I will regulate. You come to me for what money you wish to spend for yourself, that's all, and give me your word that you will take no money from the office."

"All right. I'll do it, just to show you that it's easy enough. Here's the pocket-book." And he gave it into her hand. "But I'll take a shilling first to begin on."

"What do you want of a shilling?"

"Cigars."

"Well, there are two fourpenny-pieces. Try to make that do. Did you ever reckon up how much your cigars cost you in the course of the year? Let us see, you smoke at least two a day, at an average cost of fourpence a piece, which amounts to four shillings and eightpence a week. Now fifty-two times four shillings and eightpence make twelve pounds two shillings and eightpence a year, to say nothing of those you give your friends. Twenty pounds will scarcely cover your expenses in that line."

"As our old friend Abigail Stillings says, 'Who'd a-think it,'" said Mr. Gray, laughing; but he was surprised to find the sum so large.

The next morning Mr. Gray had gone some distance from the house before he remembered that he had only tenpence.

"I'll risk it," he said to himself. "Perhaps I'll not want to buy anything. I'll show Annie that a man can do without money."

"Hallo, Gray!" cried a voice, interrupting his reflections. "What is the brain-study about?"

It was his old friend, Frank Raymond. The two men had not met since Mr. Gray's marriage, and as Frank was to remain in town for a week, Mr. Gray invited him home.

He lit a cigar and handed its mate to Frank, as he did this. The two conversed of old times until they reached Mr. Gray's place of business, when they separated, Frank agreeing to be at the Grays' at six o'clock.

Annie was apprised of his coming by a note from her husband. Going home, that night, as was his invariable custom he ran into Benson's to buy some cigars. Benson was surprised to see him drop the dozen he had taken up.

"Are they not good?" inquired the dealer. "We think them our choicest—"

"They are good. But on second thought I will not take any to-night."

Mr. Gray had always purchased his cigars as he used them; but now he wished he had a box at home. However, he decided to ask his wife for some money, and run out and fill his case without his friend's knowledge. Twenty-four hours had passed, and he had already begun to experience a feeling of shame, and a disinclination to ask for money. A thought of Annie crossed his mind.

"Pshaw, she doesn't have to treat friends to cigars," he muttered.

Frank Raymond was already at his house, and Annie had a tempting little supper for them, and Annie was looking her prettiest. When supper was over he took Annie aside, and asked for half-a-crown, which Annie gave him grudgingly.

Then he excused himself for a moment, and bought some cigars. They were wretched affairs however, and filled the house with a villainous odour, for he had to get them at a new place, Benson's being too far off.

The next day the two friends started out together, when Mr. Gray, with an air of having forgotten something, said:

"Excuse me a minute."

"I'll go back with you, if you have forgotten anything," said Mr. Raymond.

Mr. Gray clapped his hand on his pocket.

"I thought I had forgotten my pocket-book, but I haven't," he said. "So it's all right," and then hurried on, his cheeks tingling with shame at the deceit. But he could not risk having his friend go back with him and stand by while he asked for money.

Mr. Gray was lucky that day. He had no calls for money, and he had half-a-dozen of those horrid cigars left, a couple of which he smoked in the street after his friend left him. In fact,

he concluded to risk another day in the same way.

But on this day he realised the old adage, "It never rains but it pours;" for from being asked to change a five-pound note, to getting his coat ripped, and asking for credit at his tailor's, the day was a series of mortifications.

Annie was unaware of all this, in fact she thought her husband was failing to realise the situation; so when, at night, Mr. Gray asked her for money to spend the next day she wickedly put him off with some excuse, and ingeniously evaded the request until he was forced to prefer it before his friend.

"I want a few shillings, Annie. Please get them for me," he said, in an off-hand manner.

"A few shillings! What do you want with a few shillings?"

"There, Annie, don't bother a fellow. I'm in a hurry."

But with grave deliberation she drew out a shilling, and laid it down, then another and another, next a sixpence, next a fourpenny-piece, and last threepence in coppers.

"Let me see—three shillings—sixpence, a fourpenny-piece—a threepenny-piece, and here are threepence in coppers—four shillings and fourpence. Will that do?"

"Yes," and Mr. Gray hustled them into his pocket, and hurried from the room.

He was in hopes his friend would inquire into the cause of the scene, when he would tell him of the compact and how it originated. It would then pass as a joke. But Mr. Raymond did not make any remark. Instead, he thought to himself:

"Good gracious, what a horrid grind she is! And I thought her so pretty. I never supposed Albert would have made such a meek husband. Catch me getting married, and having shillings doled out to me in that way."

He pitied his friend's embarrassment but did not appear to notice it. Instead, he chatted unconcernedly of old friends and past times. Suddenly turning a corner, they met two mutual acquaintances.

Hand-shakings and inquiries followed, and the four had so much to say that Mr. Gray decided to send a note to his partner, and spend the forenoon with his friend. The party now adjourned to a restaurant, and Mr. Raymond, aware of the exact amount of his—Mr. Gray's—funds, ordered lunch.

Before separating a little excursion to Brighton was proposed for Monday. Mr. Gray invited them, meantime, to spend the evening at his house. The evening passed as a pleasant one.

Annie was in excellent spirits, sang and played and was altogether charming. Mr. Raymond, remembering the money, decided that matrimony was indeed a snare when women were so deceptive.

The next day, which was Sunday, Mrs. Gray, without being asked, gravely handed her husband two shillings. Mr. Raymond was present, but did not appear to notice it. He was apparently engrossed with the book he was reading. But he heard Mr. Gray ask:

"What's that for? Oh, the contribution box. Thank you," he said. But to himself he added:

"Why not save it to go with the shilling I have already, so as not to be compelled to ask for money on Tuesday? Then if I succeed in getting some for Monday's trip, without the knowledge of my friends, this absurd farce will end, without any more unpleasantness."

Monday morning came all too soon, for try as he would, he could not get the attention of Annie when he endeavoured to broach the subject of the projected trip. Fidgetting with his knife and fork he cleared his throat at last and in a nervous way made the plunge.

Mrs. Gray elevated her eyebrows.

"To Brighton? Pray for what? It is hardly the season for excursions."

Mr. Raymond really pitied his friend's evident distress, so he said, jokingly:

"Why, you see, Mrs. Gray, we want to get off for a time as we used to when we were boys."

The lady smiled grimly, and replied firmly: "Albert is, as you see, too extravagant by half. I cannot, in the present state of our finances, give my consent to his going."

With these words, spoken with great composure, she walked off, leaving the gentlemen to themselves.

"By heavens, Albert, I never would stand that," said Frank, vehemently. "To be tutored like a schoolboy! Haven't you any money at the office? If not, call upon me for any amount, and let us hurry, or we shall be late."

"No. I'm afraid I cannot go. I am pledged not to take any money from the office, and it would not be right to accept of any from you."

Glad of an excuse, Mr. Gray then told his friend the secret of his wife's conduct.

"Whew, so that is it?" said Frank. "Well, I'm glad to have my faith in womankind restored; but isn't she overdoing the matter? Did you ever refuse her money before others?"

"I think I did last summer, when Mrs. Osgood was visiting her. They wished to go and see a friend living in Kent. I thought it was foolish and told them so; and finally refused my wife the money. The truth is," apologetically, "I had met with some losses, and felt that we must economise."

"Why not have allowed her to use her own judgment? Perhaps she intended to economise in other ways," said Frank.

"I believe she said something of the kind. But to tell the truth, I had got into the way of thinking that women needed to be continually curbed, or they would run into extravagances."

"It's a shame to treat a high-spirited woman in that way."

"I realise it now fully, more fully than you can, unless you go through with my experience. Annie said she had done plain sewing to pay for the things she needed, rather than ask me for the money. I understand it now; for I would far rather have earned the money for our trip by sawing wood than have asked for it. Fancy having to always ask."

"Do you know, Albert, I am glad this happened. I may marry some time; in fact, I'm thinking of it strongly; and now I shall avoid the course you have taken. Otherwise, I presume I might have done just the same. I believe a great many men do."

"Do? Why, yes. My mother never had a penny without asking father for it, and she helped earn it all, and was prudence and industry personified. I'll turn over a new leaf. Ah, here come our friends."

Mr. Raymond, to Mr. Gray's great relief, said it would be impossible for him to go on the proposed trip, owing to unforeseen circumstances, whereupon Mr. Gray, in an off-hand manner, proposed that as Frank could not go, they should all come to his house that evening again.

"My wife will be glad to see you," said he.

The week had passed, and "Richard was himself again," or could be if he chose. But his wife had mirrored his past actions so truly and forcibly, that he had no wish to repeat himself. Annie had taken care to curb his extravagances, by giving him always a little less than he asked for, and invariably inquiring how he spent it; and, meantime, reckoning up how much he had had each day, with great exactness.

All this, as he knew, was copied from his own custom. Besides, he reflected, if he found it so disagreeable for a week, how much more so must it seem year after year with no prospect of change? "Tis one half to own it," and the other half to reform, we suspect.

"There, Albert," said his wife, "I am glad the farce is ended. Resume your prerogative."

It was Tuesday evening, at half-past six precisely, when Mrs. Gray said this. At the same time she handed her husband his pocket-book, and then returned to her seat. Mr. Gray counted the money carefully, and then divided it into two equal piles. This accomplished, he crossed over to his wife and placed one in her lap, saying:

"Henceforth we will share alike. Buy what you choose. I have faith in your prudence and judgment. I am not infallible. Why need I sit in judgment upon you?"

Mrs. Gray's eyes glistened with pride and happiness, as she replied:

"Believe me, Albert, you will never have cause to regret this; for now I shall have an opportunity to use my reasoning faculties."

He never did regret it.

M. R. P. H.

## PUBLIC AMUSEMENTS.

### THE DRAMA.

#### IMPERIAL THEATRE.

By patient steps and untiring study Miss Litton has won the right to be regarded as a worthy interpreter of the most charming of Shakespeare's heroines. The poet's ideal view of nature finds its fullest expression in "As You Like It," and the essence of this delightful comedy is embodied in the character of Rosalind, which Miss Litton impersonates with exquisite finish and grace. Pretty as are the opening scenes of the play, they yield in interest to those which follow with the adventures of the runaway maid in the forest of Arden. A splendid set has been painted and arranged by Mr. Perkins, and the new Rosalind looks bewitching in her tasteful doublet and hose. She seems to have thrown herself more completely than any actress we can remember into the part, and plays with an archness and vivacity that leaves no point untouched. The songs and glees belonging to the play are fairly well rendered, and the mounting is excellent throughout. It should be mentioned that the Imperial is now an "afternoon theatre," the performance of Shakespeare's comedy commencing at three o'clock.

#### NEW SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE.

MRS. BATEMAN'S idea to "re-establish a theatre where the prices are within the reach of all, the old system of carefully, but not extravagantly, producing good plays at moderate cost, and for a limited number of nights," is a good one, and we shall be glad to see it successfully carried out; but to secure this result some efforts must be made to secure a good tragedian. The revival of "Macbeth" showed the evident care and intention of the management to do justice to the mounting of the play, and "Locke's music" pleased the large audience present; there was the best Lady Macbeth of the present day in Miss Bateman (Mrs. Crowe); and with one or two exceptions the lesser parts were fairly sustained. The Macbeth of Mr. H. Talbot, however, was such a monotonous and heavy performance as to prove quite depressing in its effect. Mr. Walter Bentley, although appearing a little too deliberate at times, threw considerable vigour into his rendering of Macduff, and made the points tell, securing a hearty recall at the end of the famous scene in the fourth act. There was a good Banquo in Mr. Pennington, and the three Witches were admirably represented by Mr. John Archer, Mr. Robert Lyons, and Miss Maud Irvine, the latter singing with charming expression. If for no other cause the piece was welcome on account of Miss Bateman's splendid impersonation of Lady Macbeth. It has, we think, gained in fullness and intensity since she was seen at the Lyceum, and is from first to last a noble study of the great character. "Macbeth has now given place to "Othello."

#### PARK THEATRE.

The famous Adelphi drama of "The Green Bushes" has been revived here in capital style, and, notwithstanding its old-fashioned construction, has met with an excellent reception. Miami, the Indian huntress, is represented in a most picturesque and pleasing manner by Miss Amy Steinberg, who throws great feeling into

the part. As now depicted it is excess of passionate love rather than vindictive hate that prompts the terrible revenge which she wreaks upon her English husband. In the last scene also Miss Steinberg displays deep pathos, and thus wins the deep sympathy of the audience. Mr. Richard Douglass has painted some very effective scenes, and the revival is thus in every way satisfactory.

A NUMBER of the most popular musical and dramatic artists of the day combined to do honour to Mr. G. Moore's benefit at St. James's Great Hall. In the afternoon Mr. Maedermott appeared as "bones," with Mr. Moore, Messrs. Walter Howard and Herbert Campbell being the "tambos." Miss E. Farren, Miss Fowler, Miss Jennie Lee, Miss Helen Barry, Miss St. John, Mr. Terry, Mr. W. Rignold, and many other well-known favourites introduced songs and brief entertainments. At night, beside other miscellaneous attractions, there was a comic gathering, in which Maedermott, Campbell, Vance, Leybourne, Coyne, Rowley, and Riley took part.

A PORTRAIT model of Lewis Paine has been added to Madame Tussaud's exhibition.

### GIRLHOOD

A LOVELY spectacle is presented by a group of girls numbering sixteen summers. Life's inspiration and exhilaration is fully enjoyed in their innocence and guilelessness. Bright and fair are hopes and fortunes. They are at that enviable period when castles in the air are built as certain realities; fancy paints delightful pictures; the world is like a fairy land full of weird spirits—a beautiful creation. This the season of earth's witcheries and fascinations; when spectres and ghosts never come out from their hiding places; the song and the dance are the revels of the day, and pleasant dreams the fancies of the night.

Girlhood resembles the bud blossoming into the rose's charm, the fragrant leaves resplendent with rich hues. The canker worm that may devour the petals is concealed; the hand that is to pluck it from the parent stem is unknown; no creed of belief is recited that it will fade away or fall to ashes—that it will ever droop and die. What the flower will be only watching and waiting will develop. No one can prophesy what the future of these maidens will be. Their years may be full of bliss and joy, or they may be full of grief and sadness. Who can foretell if storm or sunshine will most prevail in the firmament of their maturity? Time's great clock will only strike the hours and days of the revelation.

It is well that no human hand can lift the veil to peer into the Book of God to discover what is there registered as the lot of womanhood. Angels never whisper the plans or disclose the designs of the Heavenly King. When the date arrives for the Royal Master's bidding they bring His messages to earth and return again to the Celestial Messenger; only then is visible the gladness or the sorrow these winged angels have brought as the allotted portion of men and women.

To each of this throng of girls undoubtedly will come the story of the heart; each one of them will feel love's rapture or misery; for them will be truth or falsity, constancy or estrangement, devotion or desertion. Some will be touched by passion, with its ecstasy and its enchantment; others will relate the tale of treachery and the bitter separation. The volume of life will be blurred by regret and anguish, mourning over graves where love lies buried deep.

It is God's will that girlhood should not understand that woman's heart and woman's love are often called to endure terrible suffering; to shed silent tears over wretchedness and weariness, often bankrupt in affection, betrayed, deceived, duped in trust; holding to her bosom an empty

casket, without gems or jewels. Women as they will be, they will hear a repetition of the trite avowal of manly love; listen with willing ear to sweet, tender words; to them will be sworn vows of eternal fidelity; the betrothal will be the fulfilment of wooing; marriage, the test of verity and of stability.

As these girls are now gazed upon, young in years, fresh and fair, gay and thoughtless, unconcerned about human ills and mishaps, or the mutability of creature happiness, it is cruel that misanthropy should hasten to break the spell of delusion, or tell them in mournful numbers of trials and tribulations. There are some persons, incredible as it may seem, who will be anxious to arouse in these artless girls suspicions and distrust; marring youth and joyousness. Keen darts and severe wounds will pierce soon enough tender emotions.

If existence is to be one long ache, with sharp cries, momentary freedom should be left unmolested by wretched forebodings. Girls should have no black pall thrown over them by the hand of disappointed murrurs. It is far better for the spring-time of woman to look forward to no autumn frosts or winter's snows; they are only in the distance, travelling on the chariot wheels of time at a rapid pace.

It is natural that girlhood should not attend any of the dull rehearsals of veteran actors, who have played out their comedy and tragedy on the stage of life. Whether our lasses will pass a short sojourn or a long pilgrimage on earth's awards the interested student cannot learn; the chart of information and knowledge is closed against curious inquirers; it is kept rolled up by the Great Teacher against vain investigations. Among these sprightly girls with smiles and blushes there may be heroines, ministering angels, illustrious poetesses, famous authoresses, sisters of charity, black-veiled nuns. There may be idols, before whose shrine men will instantly worship; some may prove society's belles; stars of home; angels in the house. It is prayed that none will efface virgin purity, or lose Madonna virtue—whose eye will gleam with a siren's glance to decoy victims by wiles and cunning; rather may saint's cross-mark and martyr's fire be their lot!

It is not wonderful that girlhood looms up as one of nature's peculiar attractions—that it should possess uncommon loveliness and fascinations for the passing multitude and idle wayfarers. Happy girlhood! With an unsullied white sheet spread before you, upon which has not been traced sorrow nor remorse, it would be well if no pen mars it by writing an unwomanly record on the open page. Separated as these companions will be by different paths, some whose way will be strewn with flowers, some with thorns, the memories of these bright, fleeting years will be the dearest and most cherished treasures of bygone days.

### FACETIE.

#### A FAILED MISSION.

When first in Yankee-land Parnell  
Arrived, the people said he came  
The tale of Ireland's wrongs to tell,  
And set the country in a flame.

But though with kindness he was  
met,  
From recent news there's now small  
doubt  
That all Parnell is like to get,  
Is just a broad hint to get—out.

—Fun.

#### A REGULAR "STROKE."

LANDLADY: "My customers say your beer has been bad lately. Can it be the water?"

DRAYMAN: "Oh, no, mum, it can't be the water, as the gov'nor has it 'paralysed' (analysed) every month!"

—Fun.

#### BE BLOW-ED.

"Yis, yer riverence, all thim names he called



me, an', sis I, "I wouldn't demane meself to lose me timper wid such a low blackgyard," so I jist knocked him over wid the stick and come away." —Fun.

#### FAIR BUT NOT FALSE.

SOME special services have been held at Brighton, amongst others one for cabmen, during which a couple of drivers got into a discussion with the minister, and told him that "fares," especially ladies, were fond of attempting to cheat the cabman. The notion of cheating a cabman is awfully exhilarating! Who could ever hope to succeed? At any rate not a lady fair. No, no, cabby, you may not be as black as you are painted (that is not necessary), but believe that ladies try to cheat you we cannot, and we regard the statement as "rank" falsehood. —Fun.

#### GETTING OUT OF A DIFFICULTY.

CUSTOMER: "Dear me, Mr. Puddifoot, why your fourpenny pork pies are but a very little larger than those at twopence."

PUDDIFOOT: "That's quite true, and I often hear the same remark. I see how it is, I shall have to make them twopenny pies smaller." —Fun.

#### THE GASTER.

In "Honi soit qui mal y pense,"

A motto which we owe to France,

There is, as you will see,

A sweetly strange coincidence:

What's "honey-sucky" in the French,

We render "Evil bee?" —Fun.

#### HEADS AND TALES.

FRIEND: "Have you heard those extraordinary tales that are wagging about the secret societies in Russia?"

PHILOSOPHER: "Yess; but have you thought what extraordinary heads those fellows must have who wag such tales?" —Fun.

#### CONSCIENCE MONEY.

THE Chancellor of the Exchequer purposely refrains from requesting us to acknowledge the following sums, received as conscience money, for the reasons stated—namely:

From the Postmaster-General—for his threatened obstruction of improved method of scientific communication—£1,000,000 (paid in used postage stamps).

From the Chairman of the London School Board—for attempting to screw out a salary for himself, after anxiously seeking for the office when he knew there was no "screw" attached to it—£4,000 (paid by the check he received from his opponents).

From the Secretary of Ireland—for not taking measures to prepare for the distress which was so imminent—£20,000 (paid in Irish "harp-pence").

From the First Commissioner of Public Works—for his neglect of the streets during the recent frosts and thaws—£100,000 (paid in valuables lost in the London mud).

#### A RED-DY ANSWER.

VERY RED-HAIRED PASSENGER: "I say, guard, why on earth don't the train go on?"

GUARD: "Good gracious, sir! put your head in; how can you expect it to go on while that danger signal is out." —Fun.

#### "THE BRADINESS IS ALL."

YOUNG SWELL (on box seat, to omnibus driver): "Cold work yours, driver."

OLD BIRD: "That it be, sir, sure-ly, pertickler for the nose, sir. Now, when you gets behind a good cigar—one as a gent like you smokes—the atmosphere seems reglar changed." —Judy.

#### DIVISION OF LABOUR.

AUNT MARY: "Well, Tommy, shall I carry your bat and stumps for you?"

TOMMY: "No, aunty, tanks! Me tarry bat and tumps. 'Oo tarry me!" —Fun.

#### "A PREDESTINATE B.A."

MAMMA (entering): "Now, I'm sure you children are in mischief, you are so quiet!"

ETHEL (in a rapturous whisper): "Hush, ma! Tommy's been painting a spider's web on grandpa's bald head while he's asleep, to keep the flies off!" —Fun.

#### SUB ROSA.

(How the captain gets his clothes to sit so nicely.)

"Well, Jinks, what is it?"

"Your new morning suit, sir. I've worn it every evening for the last fortnight."

"All right, Jinks! Just put on my blue frock coat and the check trousers for a couple of hours. I shall want them after lunch. And then you can get yourself into my dress togs—I'm going out to dine at eight." —Punch.

#### GRANDFATHER'S RIDDLE.

GRANDPA: "Your twentieth birthday, is it, Ethel. Why, bless me, that's exactly the same number as I've had."

ETHEL: "Oh, Grandpa! Why you're eighty."

GRANDPA: "Ah, yes; yet you have had as many birthdays. There's a riddle for ye!"

(N.B.—Is it necessary to give the answer? The old gentleman was born on the 29th February, eighty years ago.) —Funny Folks.

#### APPEARANCES ARE DECEPTIVE.

COUNTRY BELLE: "Good gracious. They said the ladies in town copied the gentlemen in everything; but—but—have they got to wearing moustaches?"

(No, they only wore the new "cloud respirators.") —Funny Folks.

#### THE GOOD SHIP "FAITH."

I SENT my ship a sailing in my boyhood's happy hours,

With a freight of choicest blossoms from life's brightest earthly flowers,

And I said, "Sweet breezes wait her swift across the golden main,

And I'll wait with hope and patience until my ship comes home again."

But I grew from youth to manhood with a mind that knew no rest,

Yet with eager eyes looked seaward o'er the ocean's silver crest

For a glimpse of my lost vessel that had been so long away,

Until I almost fear'd to ask or think what could her so long delay.

But as old age was gathering o'er me and my life was nearly spent,

O'er life's ocean like a phantom with its sails all torn and rent,

I saw my ship, though sorely battered, still afloat upon the main,

Battling bravely with the billows coming once more home again.

And I said, "Worn-out and useless, should you ever reach the strand,

Like this poor heart be you guided by an Almighty's loving hand,

That though reft of all your beauty and a sightless bulk you lay,

You may be to me more priceless than when first you sailed away." O. T.

#### STATISTICS.

AMERICAN LIVE STOCK.—The annual report of the sales of live stock in the Chicago market during 1879 has just been published. From it we learn something of the magnitude of American resources in the matter of meat production, the number of cattle sold in this one market being about one third as many as the entire number in Great Britain, and the number of pigs sold three times as many. In 1879 no fewer than 1,215,672 head of cattle, 6,448,933 pigs, 235,119 sheep, and 10,473 horses were sold. In every depart-

ment an increase is shown over the sales of 1878. All cattle are sold by the 100 lb., and the average price for the year for good average quality steers was a fraction under 2d per lb. For 1878 the average price was from 3 dols. to 4 dols. per 100 lbs. Sheep sold at from 3 dols. 50 cents to 5 dols. per 100 lbs., as against 2 dols. 50 cents to 4 dols. 50 cents in 1878.

#### HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

FURNITURE POLISH.—One ounce bees-wax and half ounce white wax, cut into thin shreds and dissolved in one pint of turpentine. It will require to be stirred occasionally while dissolving; apply with a piece of flannel and polish with a dry soft duster.

LEMON CHEESE CAKES.—Take one pound crushed loaf sugar, quarter pound of butter, six eggs, leaving out two of the whites, the grated rind of two and the juice of three lemons. Place the whole in a saucepan, and let simmer until it thickens to the consistency of honey, stirring the whole time. When cold place in jars for use; it will keep twelve months.

RICE AND APPLES.—Parboil half a pound of rice tied loosely in a cloth, untie and spread the rice out, then place in the centre some apples cut up, tie up the cloth so that the apples shall be surrounded by the rice, and boil again for half an hour; this very wholesome and pleasant dish may be improved by pouring over it, when ready for the table, a little milk and sugar.

MUTTON CHOPS.—The best way to dress mutton chops is to grill them on a gridiron, and when transferred to a hot-water plate or dish, put a piece of butter of the size of an acorn on each, and pepper them. For potatoe chips, peel fine kidney potatoes, cut them in very thin round slices, lay them in a cloth to dry, and fry in the wire basket in good fat; clarified pot-skimmings are preferable to dripping, and beef-suet melted down with lard is next best, but oil is the best of all for frying potatoes. The chips should be sufficient only to cover the bottom of the basket. When taken out they should be laid on paper before the fire, that the grease may be absorbed.

#### MISCELLANEOUS.

THE Irishmen of London have determined to hold concerts throughout the Metropolis in aid of Irish distress. The first entertainment has been given in the Grafton Hall.

A TOLL-KEEPER in Gloucestershire demanded toll for a bicycle, and, being summoned for taking an illegal toll, the local justices fined him half-a-crown. The toll-keeper appealed to the Queen's Bench, which has decided that a bicycle is not a carriage within the toll clauses of the Turnpike Act; they therefore affirmed the conviction.

MAUVE is to be the fashionable colour of the spring. The most beautiful mauve dresses are of soft silk, brocaded with a feather pattern in white so perfectly rendered that one is tempted to catch up the feathers to prevent them from falling in a shower to the ground.

GREAT preparations are going on for an immense sale—which will probably last a month—of all the "plant" for the manufacture of one thing or another which the late duke had collected in so lavish a manner at Welbeck. The plant includes traction engines, a large number of horses, harness, carts, drags, iron, iron piping, rails, and much property of a miscellaneous character. There is as much sawn wood lying in the store at Welbeck as the rest of the county of Notts contains.

LARGE Spanish combs, so broad and so high that they look almost preposterous, are to be seen in some of the shops. It is not in the least improbable that English ladies will adopt the Spanish fashion of wearing mantillas in lieu of bonnets, and that these combs are the avant couriers of that fashion.

## CONTENTS.

Page.	Page
TIME'S REVENGE; OR, FOILED AT LAST ... 481	CORRESPONDENCE ... 504
ALLEN'S LOVE STORY 485	
SCIENCE ... 488	No.
LOST THROUGH GOLD; OR, A BEAUTIFUL SHEER ... 489	TWICE REJECTED; OR, THE NAMELESS ONE commenced in ... 504
VIOLA HARCOURT; OR, PLAYING WITH HEARTS ... 493	ALLEN'S LOVE STORY commenced in ... 571
TWICE REJECTED; OR, THE NAMELESS ONE THE PEARL OF THE OCEAN; OR, THE AVENGEES FOILED... 498	LOST THROUGH GOLD commenced in ... 574
PUTTING HIMSELF IN HER PLACE ... 500	VIOLA HARCOURT; OR, PLAYING WITH HEARTS, commenced in ... 576
PUBLIC AMUSEMENTS... 502	THE PEARL OF THE OCEAN; OR, THE AVENGEES FOILED, commenced in ... 578
FACEIT... 502	
STATISTICS ... 503	
HOUSEHOLD TREASURES ... 503	
MISCELLANEOUS ... 503	

## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

**AQUATIC.**—We have the fullest confidence in the Oxford crew, and think they will score a victory on the 20th inst.

**BRUCE.**—No, the mother cannot be relieved of the control of the child. She alone can compel regular payments.

**AN ANXIOUS ONE.**—Mother Seigel's Curative Syrup may be procured at all chemists, and it may be taken with every advantage by you in your present state.

**JESSIE.**—Yes.

**BERNARD H.**—By the figures given, we understand your meter to read thus: Burnt up to June 1, 1877, 20,000 feet, at 3s. 9d.—£3 15s. Burnt from June 1 to Feb. 21, 38,000 feet, at 3s. 9d.—£10 15s. 8d.; total, £14 10s. 8d.

**TOE.**—If you really do want the lady for your wife you have done the best thing you could do under the circumstances.

**CHARLES.**—Do not abandon a cherished hope so easily as you intimate. Continue your visits. Put your fond wishes into "burning words," and do not give up hope till the other gentleman has been authorised to call upon the clergyman. The lady may be testing you, and it is not the part of a strong man to drop his suit on an inference. Ladies disregard logic.

**T. S. M. C.**—The young lady was perfectly right in her declining to be thought your ladylove, when you had said nothing of love to her. And now your course is this: Go to her parents calmly, and tell them in moderate language how you feel, and what you wish. If they give their consent then go to the lady and tell her—and here we put no restraint on your language.

**CLAUDINE.**—Without the advantage of seeing the picture in question, we cannot answer you categorically; but there are many picture-dealers to whom you could send a description of yours. We are bound to say, however, that pictures on glass, rather remarkable for high colouring than for good drawing, and of considerable antiquity, are not uncommon, and certainly the art is not "lost."

**T. W. P.**—1. Bread-crumbs, worms, flies, and the yolk of eggs, boiled, dried, and powdered, are the proper articles of food for gold fish. If there be aquatic plants in the water it will not need to be changed very often. 2. The food for guinea pigs is dried grain, dandelion, cabbage, parsley, a little bread, and plenty of fresh water.

**B.**—We believe the name "Arizona" is Spanish. It means sand hills.

**CLARA.**—It is not at all necessary for everyone to talk. Good listeners are very agreeable people. Answer questions intelligently when they are put to you. This implies information. If you do not possess it set about acquiring it. Learn to forget yourself, and only think of what will be agreeable to others, and you will become a pleasant, companionable, and exceptionally nice person.

**EDWARD.**—What your friend tells you is true to a considerable extent. Architects, builders, and material men sometimes do combine to deceive property owners, and in some cases they are successful in their chicanery. Still, there are honest men among architects, builders, and material men. You should also look into all the matters involved yourself. Talk with property owners who have erected buildings, and with material men and builders, wherever you can find them. Compare their statements, and write them down, and then—as you say you have plenty of time to spare—take trips to neighbouring towns, and talk with the same classes there, and see how their statements compare with those in your own town. In this way you will acquire information and be able to form an independent opinion. When it comes to the making of the contracts have your lawyer look after the architect, and secure exact copies of all the specifications, also tracings of all the plans, elevations, and sections, and be sure and have them all figured like the original drawings. Keep these copies yourself, and then watch the work and see that it is done according to agreement. Even then, if you happen to fall into dishonest hands, the chances are that you will be cheated from fifteen to thirty per cent on everything from the foundation stones to the roof.

**MARTHA and ALICE,** two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Martha is nineteen, dark hair and eyes. Alice is eighteen, golden hair, hazel eyes, good-looking.

**LUCK,** twenty-four, dark, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a gentleman about thirty-one with a view to matrimony.

**W. M.,** twenty, loving, medium height, would like to correspond with a young lady. Respondent must be fair, good-looking, fond of children.

**G. B. and D. S. C.,** two seamen in the Royal Navy, wish to correspond with two young ladies. G. B. is twenty-three, of a loving disposition, blue eyes. D. S. C. is twenty-one, tall, fond of home.

**FORCASTLE, HYDRAULIC PUMP, and MAINSHEET,** three seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with three young ladies with a view to matrimony. Forecastle is twenty-two, good-looking, light hair, blue eyes, loving. Hydraulic Pump is twenty-seven, dark hair and eyes, fond of music and dancing. Mainsheet is twenty-four, auburn hair, medium height, and fond of children. Respondents must be between twenty and twenty-four.

**JOE and ROBERT,** two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies. Joe is twenty-three, dark, medium height, good-looking, and fond of dancing. Robert is twenty-five, fair, of medium height, fond of music, good-looking. Respondents must be fond of home and music, of a loving disposition, tall, thoroughly domesticated.

## THE MYSTIC BRIDGE.

We're journeying o'er a narrow bridge,  
Stretched out by unseen hand,  
This end upon the cradle rests,  
That on the "Unknown Land."

Ye cannot broaden either side

To keep ye steady o'er;  
Poised by the hand of Fate it hangs,  
And spans from shore to shore.

Its length the traveller may not see,  
Its breadth the merest span,  
Its height for some outvies the skies,  
And nations laid the man.

For some a lowlier, rugged path,  
O'er streams less seething, deep,  
While on each traveller multitudes  
Their watchful audience keep.

But few among them care that woe  
Attends one erring fall;  
That with one misstep on the height  
Life's hope lies scattered, all.

Yet some there are whose hearts beat high  
With hope and faith and love—  
Who watch our path with tear-stained eyes,  
Proud if it keep above.

Some breathe come quick as on we go,  
And many a fervent prayer  
Is wafted up from hearts that yearn  
For our own safety there.

The giddy height oft tottering seems,  
Backward we dare not turn;  
On, on we go, each step shall find  
Enough to do and learn.

The journey may not be complete  
Till night shades fold thee round,  
And all thy waymarks, one by one,  
Lie scattered o'er the ground.

Wouldst have thy bridge unwary kept,  
Thine anchor firmly laid?  
Take thou for guidance him who said,  
"Tis I, be not afraid."

M. S.

**KATE,** twenty, brown hair, dark eyes, medium height, domesticated, would like to correspond with a gentleman about twenty-seven, tall, good-looking.

**HENRY and CHARLES,** two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies. Henry is dark, tall, good-looking, loving, fond of dancing. Charles is tall, light brown hair, blue eyes.

**MARGE and MARGARET,** two friends, would like to correspond with two seamen in the Royal Navy. Marge is twenty-two, tall, dark, of a loving disposition, fond of home. Margaret is nineteen, medium height, fair, fond of home and music, good-tempered.

**POLLY and MILLY,** two friends, would like to correspond with two gentlemen between twenty-two and twenty-five. Polly is fair, fond of home, and thoroughly domesticated. Milly is dark, and fond of music and dancing.

**EMILY C.,** twenty-two, fair, and of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a young man. Must reside in Birmingham.

**GRACE and LILY,** two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. Grace is seventeen, dark hair and eyes, medium height, good-looking. Lily is seventeen, fair, good-looking.

**W. D. and Y. L.,** two friends, wish to correspond with two gentlemen with a view to matrimony. W. D. is twenty-four, fond of dancing, dark. Y. L. is twenty-two, fond of home, fair.

**J. P. and SAMUEL,** two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies about eighteen. J. P. is fair, light hair, fond of music and dancing. Samuel is fond of children, of a loving disposition.

**LIZZIE and LAURA,** two friends, would like to correspond with two gentlemen. Lizzie is eighteen, loving, dark, domesticated. Laura is twenty-one, tall, fair, and fond of music.

**CRYPTOGRAPH and FLYING PENNON,** two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies. Cryptograph is twenty-one, of medium height, blue eyes, fair, of a loving disposition. Flying Pennon is nineteen, dark, tall, blue eyes, and fond of music.

**CLARICE and JULIA,** two friends, wish to correspond with two young men. Clarice is fair, fond of home and music. Julia is of a loving disposition, dark, good-looking.

**ALBERT,** twenty-four, light hair, dark eyes, fair, good-looking, wishes to correspond with a young lady about eighteen with a view to matrimony.

**AGNES and LILY,** two friends, would like to correspond with two gentlemen. Agnes is twenty-three, dark, fond of home and children. Lily is eighteen, fond of music and dancing.

**JOSEPHINE,** twenty, dark, handsome, would like to correspond with a gentleman about thirty, good-looking, in a good position.

**D. G. A.,** twenty-one, medium height, fair, fond of home and music, would like to correspond with a young lady about the same age.

**HARRIET and VIOLA,** two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. Harriet is twenty-two, tall, brown hair, blue eyes, fond of home and music. Viola is eighteen, medium height, fair, loving. Respondents must be about twenty-three, dark.

**CLARE and OLIVIA,** two friends, would like to correspond with two gentlemen. Clare is twenty-four, fair, loving, medium height. Olivia is fair, tall, auburn hair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition. Respondents must be tall, fond of home and children.

**JACK, GEORGE, and TED,** three seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with three young ladies with a view to matrimony. Jack is twenty, fair. George is twenty-one, dark. Ted is twenty-one, of a loving disposition, good-looking.

**JESSIE,** twenty, hazel eyes, fair, loving, medium height, fond of home, would like to correspond with a gentleman about twenty-two, good-looking, dark, tall, of a loving disposition, fond of music.

## COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

**KATHLEEN** is responded to by E. J., twenty-seven, brown hair, blue eyes, medium height.

**W. H. by—Sarah Elizabeth W.,** eighteen, tall, good-looking.

**EDGAR by—J. P. G.,** dark, medium height, of a loving disposition, fond of home and music.

**C. T. W. by—Lily,** fair, blue eyes, fond of music and dancing.

**PRETTI STRIPES by—Connie,** medium height, brown hair and eyes, good-looking.

**DASHING ALLY by—Linda,** dark hair and eyes, medium height, of a loving disposition, fond of home and children, pretty.

**LOWLY CHARLIE by—A. McN.,** fond of home and music; and by—Vera, tall, fair, golden hair, blue eyes, fond of home and children.

**KIRSTENUTTERFIELD by—F. G.,** twenty-one, blue eyes, fond of home, of a loving disposition.

**J. B. by—Lavinia,** twenty-four, medium height, fair, good-looking.

**ROGER by—Minnie,** twenty-one, brown hair and eyes, medium height, dark, good-tempered, thoroughly domesticated, fond of children.

**DOLLY by—H. W.,** twenty-seven.

**ANNIE by—Cryptograph,** twenty-five, medium height, of a loving disposition.

**ALICE by—Captain Firebrand.**

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